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What we can Learn from Secular Efficiency

THOUGHTS FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN THE APOSTOLATE

by

Rev. J.N.M. Wijngaards, MHM.

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WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM SECULAR EFFICIENCY

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from
SECULAR EFFICIENCY

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FOREWORD

It is a happy omen for the Church that the concept of planning and organisation is beginning to come into its own, witness the spate of Seminars that have taken place over the past year and the National Seminar on the Church in India Today due to take place in the month of May. Goodwill in this context is not good enough. It must be wedded to the right know-how. Business and secular management have made a fine art out of these techniques in recent decades. It seems in the fitness of things that we should make full use of the results of their research and apply them to the apostolate.

This is precisely what has been done in "WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM SECULAR EFFICIENCY" and in a manner and language designed to be of the maximum utility to all charged with responsibility for the building up of the Church in our country. It is our fervent hope that the book will have a large circulation, especially among pastors, religious and seminarians. May it help us all to channel our apostolic hopes and desires into that meaningful service that will prove our best witness to Christ and an incalculable gift to our fellowmen.

+ Angelo Fernandes
Archbishop of Delhi

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 9

1. PROBLEM-SOLVING 11

2. OPERATIONAL RESEARCH 39

3. THE CRITICAL PATH METHOD 47

4. STRATEGY 57

5. IMAGE 68

6. ORAL COMMUNICATION 89

7. CONSULTATION 110

8. HIGHER MANAGEMENT 129

9. SPIRITUAL EFFICIENCY 138

INTRODUCTION

It is fashionable for authors to apologize in the introduction to their books for having written so badly or for having written at all. I too would have plenty of reasons for offering my excuses to the reading public. This booklet is not complete. It was written in a hurry. It does not cover the whole field of the apostolate. In short, it has defects and not a few. Yet I do not think that offering excuses will do much good. I only beg my readers to keep the purpose of the booklet constantly in mind. It is intended to do only one thing: to illustrate by concrete examples how we can learn a great deal from secular efficiency. The chapters are meant to stimulate those in the apostolate to further study of such efficiency. The booklet will have achieved its aim when more priests, sisters and lay apostles discover how a more systematic approach to the apostolate can expedite their work.

The information contained in the various sections was collected from standard works on Business Management. The books listed here proved especially helpful:

L.A. APPLEY and others, *Effective Communication on the Job*, New York 1963.

W.E. DUCKWORTH, *A Guide to Operational Research*, Methuen and Co., Ltd., London 1962.

R.A. JOHNSON and others, *The Theory of Management of Systems,* Mc Graw Hill Book Co Ltd. New York 1963.

H. W. FRANCKE, *Der Manipulierte Mensch,* F.A. Brockhaus, Wiesbaden 1964.

N.R.F. MAIER and J. J. HAYES, *Creative Management,* John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York 1962.

J.G. MASON, *How to be a more Creative Executive,* McGrawHill Book Co. Ltd., New York 1960.

T.G. ROSE and D.E. FARR, *Higher Management Control,* McGrawhill Book Co., Ltd., New York 1957.

H.THEIL and others, *Voorspellen en Beslissen,* Het Spectrum, Utrecht 1964.

The examples from the various spheres of the apostolate have been given for the sole reason of proving the applicability of the general principles. No allusions to specific persons, institutions or places should be seen in them.

I owe a special word of thanks to good sister Sara Grant, R.S.C.F., for giving me so many useful suggestions and for correcting the manuscript. Her contribution has certainly given the work a wider application that might otherwise have been possible.

Chapter One

PROBLEM-SOLVING

"To act without reflection is not good.
And to be over-hasty is to miss the mark.

Prov. 19/2

Pastors have usually a tight programme of work. The apostolate demands their attention from morning till night. The Bishop who reads his daily post in the diocesan office, the parish priest who quickly plans his day over his cup of coffee, the religious who takes her place at her desk in the school or hospital at the opening of a new day: they all meet problems or foresee them, reflect on their implication and try to solve them. There are innumerable problems in the life of the Church. They are large and small. They may last for a short time or may harrass us for years. They may involve one person or a whole parish, an institution, even a diocese. Those involved in the apostolate know the nature of such problems. Many have acquired a remarkable capability in dealing with them. Their natural talents and experience have formed them into good decision-makers. Their inborn gift of imagination and the initiatives they have previously undertaken may have given them that genuine creativity and versatility of mind needed to solve problems effectively.

It is also possible that problems remain with us, that we feel incapable to face up to them or to find suitable solutions. It may be that we are searching in vain for ways and means to rid of ourselves of a difficulty without knowing precisely how to tackle the question. It is here that one spontaneously feels the need of *some systematic approach to problem solving*. How can we clear our minds regarding the first steps we should take? What is the best way to arrive at a responsible solution? What is the quickest and safest method to deal with problems that ask for an immediate decision or entail great future consequences? The secular world has developed certain guidelines for problem-solving that can be helpful to us in this matter. It is worthwhile looking at some examples.

The "Pyramid" Soap Company has been suffering heavy losses on account of the consumer's rising interest in washing powder. The problem is: will this tendency continue? Will it be necessary to switch over immediately to a greater production of washing powder? Will it be possible to recapture the market from other firms? Will the switch-over in production be justified in spite of the great expenses foreseen? The company obviously needs some systematic approach to solving this problem. Well, you may say, do we meet any problems of the same complexity in the Church? The answer is: Certainly, we do! Take the case of the Religious Order or the Diocese which intends to open a new Seminary or a house of formation. What will be the place most suited from the point of view of available site, educational facilities or promising relationships? How will future developments affect the set-up of the institute? Should we plan on a

large or on a small scale ? Will we have the required personnel to staff it, and so on. This surely presents a very difficult 'problem' with an infinite variety of complications. The way in which the problem is to be solved cannot leave us indifferent. The Superior who has to make the decision will, in one way or other, have to do some systematic 'problem-solving'.

We might take a simpler example of a personnel problem in a certain bank. The general may have three highly qualified persons on his staff who, at the first impression, would all be fit to become his assistant. The situation may be that the acting assistant manager is due to retire after two years, and that the higher management wants him to suggest the most capable persons to succeed him. Here the director has a problem : Which of the three men should be selected as the candidate ? What qualities should weigh heaviest in making this judgement? To what tests should he subject the three men to arrive at a better evaluation of their merits? How is he to exclude personal preferences and likings from his judgement ? How will his eventual choice effect his relationship with the others? In other words he faces the problem of suggesting the correct appointment to an office. The same problem we frequently meet in the Church. It is a cross for many bishops and religious superiors. It is the difficulty of deciding who, of the available personnel, is the right person for a certain job. It is one form of decision which will often require a systematic approach in the working out of the solution.

There are hundreds of problems in the apostolate that could be mentioned here: how to finance a certain pro-

ject, how to make people contribute to the Church, who to raise the number of vocations to the priesthood or religious life, how to open up a new area for the Church, How to make most efficient use of one's time. The parish priest may wonder whether it will be wise to start a new lay movement, whether he should devote time to a possible social development scheme or whether 'Alcohol Anonymous' will counteract the bad habits of some of his flock. Many of these problems can be solved and are solved with the help of common sense, experience, natural talent and inborn initiative. But for many others a more methodical approach to the solution might be most helpful.

The Methodical Approach

When hearing about the 'methodical approach', many a pastor or superior may feel uneasy. It is natural for us to react, used as we are to dealing with problems in a far more spontaneous manner. Objections will come to our mind and it will not be out of place to give them some attention.

It might be said that the methodical approach to problem solving belongs to the secular sphere. In the Church and in the apostolate we are dealing with souls. We are handling the instruments of grace. We are preaching the word of God which has its effect in man's inmost personality. It is Christ who lives and works through the Church. It is His Spirit who guides and moves us. It is prayer, sacrifice and the invisible communion of the saints which influence our external actions. Is there any place here for secular

methods of solving problems? How can we tackle problems that involve the nature of man's response to God; his conversion of heart of his refusal of grace? Can modern methods help us solve the problems of 'fewer vocations', 'confirmed sinners', 'failure in the apostolate' and 'human weakness?' Does the field of action of the apostolate not transcend the powers of human methods ?

The objection is a serious one and it demands a considered answer. It is true that in the apostolate of the Church we encounter many problems which lie beyond the power of human endeavour. We are, after all, not "fighting against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this darkness, against the evil spirits in the air." (Eph. 6/12) We need spiritual weapons: truth, justice, faith, hope in salvation and the Word of God (Eph. 6/14-17). Nothing would be more fatal than if we were to imagine that all problems can be solved by human powers alone. In the reality of the apostolate we will have to face many problems that cannot be approached in such a way. They will require prayer and sacrifice. They may be solved by God's Providential guidance of history or by the charismatic insight he may grant to one of His chosen instruments. There is that devil of whom Jesus said that it can be exorcised only "by prayer and fasting" (Mt. 17/21). No human methods will avail in such problems.

But we would be altogether mistaken if we were to think that *all* problems in the apostolate belong to this category. There are many problems which do not arise from the 'mystery of sin' (2 Thess. 2/7), but from the very

complexity of human life. Supernature builds on nature also in the apostolate. Christ left it to His Apostles to organize the natural and human aspects of their mission according to their normal human intelligence. Some examples from St. Paul's life may illustrate this point. St. Paul was often faced with the real problem of which route he should follow for his apostolic journeys, Rarely, as in the vision at Troas was he guided by a direct revelation. In the ordinary circumstances he had to take his own decisions, and these did not come about without a considerable amount of planning (cf Acts 15/36-37). Often he tried to make his journey more effective by sending others ahead of himself (Acts 19/21-22). He took quite a lot of trouble to organise collections of money in the churches he visited (2 Cor. 8-9). To avoid unnecessary delay in Ephesus Paul arranged to meet the priests of the locality in Miletus: certainly a delicate way of solving a pastoral problem (Acts 20/16-17). During his stay in Jerusalem he tackled another problem: the Jews were under the false impression that he despised the Law of Moses. On the advice of the local Church authorities, St. Paul partook in the ceremonies that concluded the nazarite vows of four Christians (Acts 21/20-24). In many more instances St. Paul was left by God to tackle problems with his own ingenuity : the problems of the plot against his life (Acts 23/12-17); the problem of the court case before Felix (Acts 24-25); the problems of his journey to Rome (Acts 27-28). In other words: Sacred Scripture itself shows us in the model life of the great Apostle of the non-Jews how pastors have to solve many problems with their own intelligence. Surely God's grace will be there, but it presupposes the applica-

tion of all human talent and ingenuity. When St. Paul enumerates all his suffering, he makes specific mention of his problems :

"Besides everything else, the thing that burdens me everyday is my anxiety about all the Churches. Who is weak without my becoming weak? Whose conscience is hurt without my being fired with indignation?" (2 Cor 11/28) St. Paul's whole personality was involved in the encounter with his pastoral problems. He exerted all his human powers to tackle them.

It is here that the methodical approach finds its justification also in the apostolate. For 'method' is no more than 'a streamlining of thought'. The systematic approach is really a refined way of using our common sense. If God expects us to use all our human power of intelligence to meet a challenge, he cannot but sanction the fact that we do it in a rational, and thus a methodical, way. The method of 'problem-solving' that has been worked out by human minds in the experience of the secular world, can rightly be applied to many problems in the apostolate too. There is nothing 'unholy' about these methods, any more than God's ministry excludes good common sense. In fact, where the methodical way of solving problems proves more efficient, we would be entirely wrong in refusing to make use of it. Far from fearing the methodical approach, we should welcome it where ever possible.

First Step: Determine the precise nature of the problem

The secular worlds of business, administration and education have worked out a methodical approach to problems

which involves five steps. The first step consists in the accurate definition of the nature of the problem on hand. In many cases this stage might seem quite superfluous. We might be inclined to say: "But I know what my problem is!" However, experience and a few sober reflections teach us that this would be a false assumption.

Let us begin by considering the human mind. It is essential for the mind to concentrate on one thing when thinking. However fast it may switch its focus of attention from one subject to another, it can only concentrate on one of them at a time. This necessarily entails that the mind will tend to dwell on one aspect of the question and overlook other important aspects. This will all the more readily happen when in the course of time we have acquired habits of thinking, or when we have become emotionally attached to a particular way of considering things. Is this exaggerated? Let us take some concrete instances.

The parish priest of a mission station feels that his new assistant has become a problem case. This young priest proved quite enthusiastic and active on his arrival from the Seminary. He took his share in the ministerial work with all the dedication and willingness one could have expected. But then a decline set in. The assistant began to show signs of reluctance to go to the villages on the normal pastoral rounds. Whenever possible he leaves it to his parish-priest to do this work. He tries to find excuses for his unwillingness to do the ministry in the outstations. The parish priest experiences this as a kind of resistance to his authority, as an escape from duty, as an unfair dodging of a common task. In short: the assistant

has become problematic to him and he may not know what to do about it. He may tell the bishop that Father So-and-so had better be appointed some where else in a school or in a town parish, since he proves unwilling to work in the villages.

Frequently, the true nature of such a problem has not been understood. It is quite possible that the parish priest has jumped to his conclusions without sufficient investigation. If he allows his feeling of resentment to predominate he may simply attribute the young man's reluctance to a basic lack of the apostolic spirit. Or he may overlook other aspects, as he cannot imagine the difficulties the other man may experience. The reasons given by the assistant will then be looked upon as empty excuses and not as the real source of trouble. But suppose that the parish priest does *not* start presuming that he knows the real nature of the assistant's problem. Suppose he begins with the methodical assumption that he still has to determine where the problem lies, then he might find out that the assistant feels incompetent to do his work through lack of a proper knowledge of the vernacular. The assistant may or may not realise this himself. From friendly conversations and a real attempt to discover the man's difficulty, it may emerge that he feels very much his inability to speak the local language. Perhaps people have been commenting on it. Perhaps he has begun to grow annoyed at his stumbling over words during catechism class or during the sermon. After some time he may have become self-conscious about it. Speaking in public in that language has grown into a real 'odium'. He has begun to look upon his weekly sermon as a burden which he tries to escape in every possible

way. It is obvious that the discovery of the real nature of the problem will show the way to the proper solution. The parish priest will now be able to present his bishop wi h a different kind of report. He may suggest that his assistant be given some special facilities to overcome this language problem. In this way he will have tackled the difficulty effectively and saved a man from degradation and, perhaps, from a life of unnecessary self-accusation.

It is surprising to see how often we imagine we know the precise problem we are dealing with. I remember a case of sister, teaching in a high school, who wanted to begin the Y.C.S. The response to her many invitations was very poor. At the first meetings that were organized some children turned up, but soon very few remained. The sister did everything possible to improve the situation. In class she often harped on the beauty of this apostolate and the need for her pupils to volunteer. All to no avail. In the end she came to the conclusion that there was something wrong with the children. She attributed to them a total lack of apostolic spirit. Fortunately she had the good sense to call in a full-time organizer. This person soon came to the conclusion that the Sister herself was the real problem standing in the way of the development of the Y.C.S. With all her good intentions she had made the grave mistake of dominating the proceedings right from the beginning. The children had immediately sensed that the Y.C.S. meetings were going to become an exact replica of religion classes and so they backed out. The full-time organizer advised the sister not to attend the meetings at the beginning. Participation immediately went up. After some time, when with outside help the group had begun

to function normally, sister was advised to be present, but not to interfere. In this way the group was gradually established until sister could take her normal share as spiritual adviser. All through she had imagined that the problem lay with the children. In actual fact it lay with her. The determination of the real problem was the first step to a systematic solution of it.

In other instances the problem may be even more complicated. It may be that we simply feel that there is something wrong, and yet we find it impossible to lay our finger on the sore spot. A certain bishop may feel frustrated because he notices that many important matters cannot have the considered attention he would like to give them. Sisters of a certain Congregation would like him to give regular conferences on the Vatican Documents, but he knows he will hardly manage to prepare such talks as well as he would like to do. And so he does not know whether he should accept or not. Many weighty documents, enquiries, reports, letters of information, keep coming in by post and they are dutifully laid aside for further study— a further study which he feels is highly unlikely to materialise. He has received requests to attend meetings on a regional or national level, but he wonders in how far his presence will be required and what contribution he should make towards them in the line or serious preparation. The diocesan bulletin and the regional weeklies are foremost in his attention and he would gladly send in more articles, if only he knew more precisely what type of subject was most necessary for his people. At the same time he receives innumerable invitations to attend functions in schools, parishes and other institutions. He sees possibi-

lities for more frequent ecumenical contacts with dignitaries of other Christian Churches. He understands the legitimate claims for personal visits made by the outlying parishes, by the religious houses in his diocese and top-ranking officials in his place of residence. It may be that all these things leave the bishop with a general sense of despondency, with the certainty that there is something wrong even though he does not know exactly where.

In cases of this kind it pays to approach the matter very methodically. It is good to reflect on the fact that one has not yet discovered the true nature of the problem and that it is therefore necessary to collect data from which it can be determined. All the factors that seem to enter into the picture could, for instance, be written down and compared. In the case of the bishop which we cited as an example, it may well be that the crucial question revolves around the division of time. It may be that the traditional set-up of his daily routine has not left enough room for the many important activities that demand his time: study of contemporary and administrative documents, the preparation of conferences and articles, the visits etc. There may be less important activities that have so far taken up too much of his day, such as correspondence, accounts and other administrative duties. The real solution for the bishop might then prove to be the appointment of a very efficient secretary, who could take down his letters in shorthand and look after all the filing and current administration.

When tackling problems we should consequently beware of jumping to conclusions. Let us first look at the case systematically, distrusting even our own understanding

of the problem. Let us first try to find out, from all available information, what precisely is at the root of the difficulty. Clear knowledge of the nature of the problem goes a long way towards bringing about a valid solution.

Second step: Collect facts about the problem

It is well known how much we are inclined to generalise and to formulate over-all statements which are actually only based on one or two instances. The secular fields of problem-solving have established beyond doubt that the greatest obstacle to an effective approach in the matter often lies in our ignorance of the factual situation.

A certain Catholic literature Centre complains of lack of response on the part of the readers. Whatever booklet they produce, only few copies are sold. They have attempted various improvements, such as reduced rates, more attractive covers and better paper. Nothing seems to help. Very frequently one will discover that in these circumstances nothing further is done to get more information, more reliable data about this lack of response. Any advertizing agency will tell us that the marketing of a product requires a good deal of research regarding the demands of the consumer and the best areas of distribution. First of all, is the lack of response universal, or does it affect only certain sectors of the faithful? Secondly, has the product been sufficiently brought within easy reach of the reading public? Thirdly, what kind of needs are keenly felt by the reading public so that a response would be expected ? It is no use continuing with any literature programme without assessing at least a few of such basic facts.

Even if it were to involve some expense, this research should be undertaken. The problem cannot be solved without an adequate supply of reliable data.

Or consider the complaint, so frequent in some parts of the country, that Catholic schools are not willing to accept Catholic children. I know one instance where serious accusations of this nature were taken to the Hierarchy with respect to certain educational institutions. Meetings were held with view to solving the problem. The discussion had already proceeded to an advanced stage when it was suggested that reliable information should first be collected. The resulting facts were an eye-opener to all concerned. It was proved beyond doubt that, in the area under discussion, all Catholic children legitimately applying for education had been taken into Catholic institutions. Where applicants had been rejected, the reason proved to be the lack of the required academic standard. Upon this information, the complaint was withdrawn. The whole commotion had begun with a mixture of exaggerated personal grievances on the part of certain individuals which had led to generalizations. I have no desire to discuss here the stand taken or to be taken by Catholic schools in the matter. This simply affords a good illustration of how the lack of reliable facts can obstruct the resolving of a problem.

Facts are required in all kinds of problems: whether they lie on the human plane or in the material order, whether they concern one parish or a whole diocese, whether they lie within our own field of experience or not. In complicated matters we may need specialized advice and the help of people trained to collect statistical data. In the more

ordinary problems of daily pastoral life we may have to do some of our own research. Whatever its form, let us not forget that it is no good attempting to solve a problem without knowing the facts. An adequate supply of reliable data is one of the pre-requisities of responsible decision-making in the pastoral field also.

Third step: Search for new ideas and alternative solutions

God has endowed man with creative faculties. The development of human history is one continuous illustration of this theological fact. Of all the creatures God made, there is only one that has been made "in His likeness", in the likeness of the Creator. Man alone, by the use of his mind can, as it were, "create" new combinations on earth. The coming of Christ, with its introduction of a "new creation' has also marked the beginning of man's creativity in the spiritual field in new forms of Christian charity and service. The very world in which we live and the Church in which we have grown up witness to the influence of man's creative thinking.

One might wonder what this 'creativity' has to do with the solving of problems. The answer is that in the solution of any new problem man *has to* use his creative power. A brief survey of modern science will convincingly demonstrate this. All the new forms of transport arose in response to man's need to escape from being bound to place and to conquer distance. This problem urged him to solutions which each in turn were truly revolutionary and creative: the use of animals as means of transport, then chariots and wagons, motorcars, steamers, aeroplanes and

rockets. Think of the field of communication. Man was faced with the problem of conveying messages to other persons. In the course of time this problem gave rise to such wonderfully new creations as script, the alphabet, ink and writing paper, printing, the telephone and telegraph system, radio, and television. In every human field of life, be it building, war, agriculture, medicine, administration or industry we find innumerable examples of the creative action of man. This surely was in God's mind when He turned the world over to man with the words: "Subject the earth!" The conquest of the world entails the gradual overcoming of many problems by new creative interventions of man.

It would be a fatal mistake to restrict this creativity merely to the extraordinary new inventions made from time to time. Creativity is a normal element in our daily life. It is an absolute requirement in the solution of our ordinary problems. Perhaps we have not given thought to this. Suppose a phone call comes through to the pres ytery that a Catholic lady who lives ten miles away, is at the point of death. The parish priest would like to rush to the place, but it so happens that his car is out of order. What shall he do ? He may first think of his assistant who possesses a motorbike. Suppose the assistant proves to be away at an association meeting, so that it is difficult to reach him. The parish priest might then phone to a good Catholic family and ask for the use of the car. Or he might consult the time-table of the bus-services to the place in question. It may be that in the end he has to adopt a combined solution: he may contact a catholic home near the hall where the association meets and ask them

to pass on the message to his assistant. After rapidly surveying all the alternative solutions the parish priest will select what seems to be the most practicable one, and often this will give real credit to his "creativity of thought. The problem may not have been so great, and yet quite a considerable amount of imagination has been exerted in a short time.

It is necessary to understand *The function of our imagination* in this process of looking for a new solution. The imagination serves to offer alternative solutions. It was the parish priest's imagination that told him : "Try your assistant !"; "Phone to Edward Morris !"; "Look up the bus time-table !" "Ask Frank Sequiera to send his son to the meeting with a message to the assistant !" The imagination does no more than suggest possibilities. It opens new doorways. It searches for new light. It concentrates on the presentation of what is new, what could be, what is likely to be forgotten. And this is a very valuable service to man. Woe to the man who has no imagination! He will find it extremely difficult to see his way out even in the daily stresses of life. At the same time, however, we should realise that the imagination is not man's power of judgement. The judgement comes *after* the alternative solutions have been proposed. In our concrete case: after the suggestion of the imagination "Try your assistant", the parish priest may come to the judgement : "This solution is not valid because my assistant is out!"

The grave mistake which we normally make is not to give enough room to our imagination and, therefore, to our creativity. We allow our power of judgement to in-

terfere, *before* the imagination has had its time to suggest all the alternatives it could. The lesson which we can learn from the secular experience in "problem solving" lies mainly in this point. We cannot afford in the solution of problem of any gravity to pass over a serious search for 'new alternatives', for 'new ideas', for true 'creative thinking!. On no account should we begin to exclude alternatives right from the beginning. We should patiently list them. We should allow our imagination to have its full say before we apply the power of our judgement. In all possible ways we should elicit the suggestions of others and register them, however absurd they may seem at first. Since the solution will have to be 'creative' in some sense or other, we may expect most benefit from the suggestions that do not appeal to us in the beginning. In many an instance we do well to write down all the alternative solutions we can think of and all the possibilities suggested to us by others.

A practical example is in place here. A certain editorial board had agreed on bringing out a series of six booklets on the apostolate of literature. After some initial difficulties competent writers were found for five of the booklets. Attempts to find an author for the sixth one failed. The editorial board was summoned to an emergency session as the time for the appearance of the booklets drew near. Many solutions were proposed as to who should be asked to be the sixth author. There were serious obstacles in the way of all suggested names. Finally, it was decided to list all the alternate solutions. One member then suggested simply dropping the sixth booklet, incorporating its contents into the five preceding ones. Of all the alternatives this one first evoked the strongest resistance.

On further inspection, however, it proved a very easy and acceptable solution, so that it was adopted by unanimous agreement. When reflecting on this problem afterwards, it was found that much time had been wasted on account of the fact that all had fixed their minds on having "*six*" booklets. Taking this for granted, the obvious solution of reducing the series to five booklets only, was not even seen as an alternative. And not seeing alternatives is a block to the mind.

A particular school, run by Sisters, was hard pressed for catechetical instructors as some of the Sisters were to be absent for some months. The principal called the Catholic members of the staff, both lay and religious, to discuss the allotment of catechetical instruction. As many of the lay teachers felt incompetent to take this commitment on themselves, the meeting dragged on with little success. During the discussion one of the teachers suggested that the help of a nearby convent be invoked : surely they could spare some people for a term! The religious present were inclined to rule out this possibility altogether. They voiced a number of good reasons which seemed to doom the attempt to failure from the very start. The principal, however, thought better of it and approached the convent in question. Without any great difficulty some Sisters were obtained on a temporary basis. It was "post-factum" an obvious solution, but it could not be recognised as such until it had been seen as an alternative.

Secular business and administration have realised the value of 'good ideas' and 'useful suggestions'. The Government of the U.S.A. has opened a special branch to collect

'new ideas' concerning matters related to the army or the administration. In this "Incentives Awards System" it collected more than 294,000 suggestions in one year. Of these it was found that 79,000 could be made use of. Awards to the amount of 2,365,000 dollars were granted for these suggestions and it saved the Government at least 200 million dollars through greater efficiency. "General Motors", one of the greatest American industries, collects over 30,000 practicable new ideas from its employees every year and has registered great advances on their account. In the Church a similar atmosphere of 'creative thinking' will be most helpful. Pastors, principals of schools, heads of institutions and all in positions of authority can only benefit from stimulating those in their care to give suggestions and recommendations. In problems of any magnitude we should enlist the help of all ranks of the faithful to give advice and express their opinions. Those involved in the direct apostolate are at times prevented from seeing alternatives because of the fixed patterns of work and thought. The electrical engineers of the Thompson Products, Inc. (Cleveland, U.S.A.) struggled in vain to find a solution to a very costly problem : leather straps that were used for polishing in the factory kept tearing at the edges. Emma Gabor, a girl who worked at one of the machines, suggested applying nail polish as she had found that this was also a good way to stop ladders in her nylon stockings. The idea brought her the award of 6000 dollars and it saved the company more than 43,000 dollars a year! The church in Western Europe was desperate over the loss of Christian labourers. An assistant parish priest in a parish of Brussels, the then Father Joseph Cardijn, worked out a simple programme of training Christian

Workers in cells, teaching them a Christian approach to work by such seemingly obvious methods as the Gospel enquiry, the review of life, and the 'See-Judge-Act' method. It was a relatively simple suggestion, but it revolutionised the development of the lay apostolate and formed millions of responsible Christians. Creativity then is a 'must' in the bringing about of valid and lasting solutions.

Fourth Step: Take some time for 'brooding' over the problem

There are a good number of problems with which we have to deal immediately on the spot. Many a priest will remember the sudden 'grave cases' encountered in the confessional, when on the spur of the moment rather weighty decisions have to be taken. It is not impossible that afterwards, when the mind has time to consider the problem again in a more leisurely manner, one may recognize that another solution might have been given. The human mind cannot give its best judgement when it is under strain or hemmed in by the urgency of the moment. Moreover, the validity of certain suggestions, the true weight of some stray remark or some passing observation, may come back to us more forcefully at a later stage. In the solving of great problems we should accustom ourselves, therefore, to allow our minds time to digest the information received and the alternative suggestions given in our subconscious. It will be found that the decision is much lighter if the problem has 'matured' in our mind and if the possible solutions have 'grown' in our understanding.

In the methodical approach to problem-solving this will mean that we will deliberately postpone the taking of

the decision with some days. One particular Catholic institution needed to be given a new name. A competition was held among the leading Catholics of the town to collect suggestions. This resulted in a list of forty-two possibilities. The board of the institution spent a long time discussing the merits and demerits of the names suggested. Some thirty were rejected outright, but it was difficult to come to an agreement regarding the remaining twelve. A heated exchange of opinion took place, which revealed some deep-seated difference of view among the members of the board. The President took a wise decision. He decided that the list of twelve alternative names should be taken up for final discussion at another meeting scheduled to take place after a month. Meanwhile the members were requested to think the matter over. When the board met again the question was resolved within a short time. It turned out that the opinions expressed on all sides had had time to mature: there was a remarkable unanimity on the merits of the name that was finally adopted.

In solving our pastoral problems it is wise to follow this procedure whenever we can. Hasty decisions usually lead to regret. Giving time to ourselves to 'brood' over the problem does not mean indefinite delay, however. We should set ourselves a time-limit. We should fix the day when we shall pronounce the verdict and make our selection from among the alternative suggestions. The interval granted us will also give us an opportunity to pray for light. Prayer is the best preparation for action.

Fifth step: Evaluate the alternatives

The final decision depends on the evaluation of the

alternatives. It is here that our power of critical thinking must come into play. What is the actual inherent value in each of the alternative solutions ? How are we to exclude the impracticable ones and select the one that will serve our purpose best? Which person is most suited for a certain appointment ? Which site should be selected for a new school ? In what manner should we go about collecting funds for a project to be undertaken? The alternatives lie before us and we may wonder how to do the elimination.

There is nothing that fills us with so much indignation as a referee who shows partiality to one team. We all expect the referee to give his decisions according to well-established rules. We want him to be objective and to pronounce judgement in strict harmony with the norms of the game. When about to select the best alternative we should be in the same frame of mind. Our selection and evaluation should be based on objective norms. such as the good of the Church, the inherent promise of development. The particular goal we want to reach. Too often we allow personal preferences, personal fears, personal ambitions or pet-ideas to keep a stranglehold on our mind and its decisions. In many a case this will not happen intentionally. We may be so much possessed by the undercurrents of our personal involvement that we hardly notice the large share which emotion or liking has in our decision. The secular branches of 'problems solving' face the same difficulty. They have proved that it pays to determine the norms on which the decision is to be based before the alternatives are taken up for selection. Usually this procedure will force us to see the alternatives in a more objective light.

Suppose that a certain parish is composed of two distinct language-groups. The introduction of the vernacular into Holy Mass has created a serious problem between the two communities. Various solutions as to alternating services in each language have been tried, but without complete success. It so happens that the parish needs to be divided anyway. The bishop finds himself faced with some clear alternatives (1) divide the parish geographically so that both new parishes have an equal share of each language group; (2) divide the parish on language basis, so that either parish caters for one language group; (3) divide the parish mainly geographically, but in such a way that either parish contains one language group as a large majority. There will be innumerable factors that will enter into the making of the decision: the preference of the groups involved; the consequences of the decision for the parts of the diocese; the economical strength of both language groups, and so on. The bishop will not be able to proceed until he has laid down for himself the norms that count for his most: whether it is the geographical size of the parish (people live nearer to the Church or the parish as liturgical community (those belonging to one language may for a more natural group for the liturgy), or the parish as centre of pastoral work (the convenience of the priests in charge), or other considerations. An objective definition of the function of a parish as a "cell" in the diocese will go a long way towards seeing objective norms on which the problems could be brought to a definite solution.

Another helpful technique developed by the secular sciences at this stage of evaluation is the procedure of discussing or considering the various alternatives in 'rounds'.

There is a first more superficial 'round' in which the alternatives are grouped under various categories : the more likely solutions, the improbable solutions, the apparently useless solutions, and whatever category may suggest itself. This provides a rough division that can serve as the basis for the second round in which each alternative is taken up for a detailed examination. Once one of the alternatives has been lifted out as the most acceptable solution, there is still a third round to consider whether this solution can be modified in harmony with the good points of the rejected alternatives.

Let me give an example. There is a demand for a hostel for Catholic students in a certain city. A religious order that has been entrusted with the spiritual care of the students at the University will have to sponsor this undertaking. The superior in question, with some of his consultors, has determined that there are quite a number of possible solutions : (1) Catholic students could be housed in Catholic families as 'paying guests' ; this could be organised through a central office. (2) A special hostel could be built as a private enterprise of the religious order. (3) The authorities in the University could be approached for the allotment of part of the official university hostels. (4) It might be possible to allow the Catholic students to take their place in the ordinary hostels, along with the non-Catholics, but special provision could be made for a more intense visitation and pastoral follow-up. In the first round of discussion no. 3 might be labelled as 'unlikely', no. 2 and 4 as 'less likely' and no. 1 as 'the most likely' solution. A more close examination in the second round might eventually return the scale of judgements. No. 1

proves impracticable because of the lack of a sufficiently numerous Catholic population. No. 2 may have to be ruled out because of the high costs. No. 3 would seem to make us project the wrong image on the university campus No. 4 remains, therefore, as the solution that promises the best results. Now the turn has come for the third round in which the solution might be modified as follows : for the time being Catholic students shall continue to seek their own accommodation in the hostels that are available. But the following steps will be taken to counteract any untoward influences they might experience in those hostels: (*a*) a service centre will be established which shall keep track of all Catholic students and which will organize regular pastoral contact with the students' chaplain; (*b*) a list will be drawn up of those hostels that have proved to be decent, reasonable in price and providing certain degree of moral security; (*c*) for girls' students a certain number of places will be obtained in Catholic families so that they can stay with them as paying guests. It is obvious that the final solution arrived at combines good elements that were found in several separate alternative suggestions! It proves that all the alternatives have been carefully weighed and that the last drop of usefulness has been squeezed out of each one of them!

Having read the above description of how problems are to be solved in a methodical approach, one might feel inclined to say : "But it is only common sense to do it in this way!" The reply is: Yes and No. It surely is common sense, because all scientific methods are fundamentally nothing else but more elaborate forms of what our mind (and, therefore, common sense) dictates. That

is why natural decision-makers will often follow the described procedure in a spontaneous way. Yet in another meaning of the word the methodical approach is not just 'common sense'. For this approach has been tested and tried like any other scientific method and it has thus acquired the status of a far more reliable guideline. Research in traffic accidents have shown that in fifty percent of motor accidents it is the head of the driver that is hit first. Consequently, the wearing of a crash helmet provides a good margin of safety. It may be argued that 'common sense' also could have told us that crash helmets increase our safety. Of course it could, but methodical research has told us something more definite, namely that in actual fact the head is the most vulnerable part. A responsible motorist *may* decide to buy a crash helmet at the mere dictates of his 'common sense'. Faced with the results of the enquiry he practically has no other choice.

ARE YOU A GOOD PROBLEM-SOLVER?

Scale to judge yourself. Put after each question "Yes", "No" or "At times". (Call to mind a problem you had to solve recently, and apply the questions to the way you went about solving it.)

1. Do you often ask yourself: "What am I trying to do ? What is the precise nature of this problem?" .....
2. Do you put your problem before other people? .....
3. Do you react against generalizing statements made by others about people or events? .....

4. Is it your custom to check the information you received on its reliability? .....
5. Do you always wait to make a decision until you have alternative solutions? .....
6. Are you incline to accept solutions suggested to you by others? .....
7. Is it your habit to postpone important decisions, setting yourself a time-limit in advance? .....
8. When making a decision, are you adverting to the undue influence your habitual way of thinking may have on you? .....
9. Do you write down the alternative solutions to problems, with the pros and cons of each? .....
10. Have you adopted five *new* solutions for various (big or small) problems in the last month? .....

Evaluation : Give yourself *two marks* for every "Yes", *one mark* for every "At times" and *no marks* for every "No".

Score :	15—20	excellent.
	10—15	good.
	below 10	insufficient.

CHAPTER TWO

OPERATIONAL RESEARCH

"The simple man trusts everything.
But the sensible man pays heed to his steps."

Prov. 13/15

The concept of "operational research" as a special branch of scientific research has gained prominence only since the Second World War. But since then it has proved so extremely useful that no respectable secular management can do without it. What does "operational research" mean? In a few words we might attempt to describe it as follows: Operational research is a systematic way of determining in how far a certain process is achieving its end and how this process can be improved, streamlined and re-directed to give better results. It is not necessary here to make many subtle distinction between various types of operational research and its close allies. In simple terms operational research means : knowing precisely what you are doing.

Let us imagine the postal services. All over the country there are thousands of post-offices, big and small, in which postal clerks are helping customers who want to send letters or parcels, who want to buy stamps or who wish to pay money orders. It is a well-known fact that the cus-

tomers often have to wait for a long time. On the other hand there are certain hours in the day when the postal clerks have little or nothing to do. In some places the postal staff can hardly cope with the flow of customers; in other places the clerks are definitely under-employed. It is easy to see that this situation is highly unsatisfactory both for the customer and for the postal service. In one way or other it will have to be worked out how with a minimum of personnel maximum service can be given to the customers. For this operational research is called in. Special investigations will be made to find out precise data as to the number of customers that enter each post office, as to the average waiting time, as to the relative distribution of busy and slack hours during the day, and so on. From this certain adjustments in the use of the personnel can be suggested such as a new distribution of staff to various post offices, a new time-table including peak-hours with increased personnel and other similar measures. Operational research will keep checking the findings in this field and will thus supply the management with the information needed to control the use of the available staff to the maximum of efficiency.

It may be useful to analyse somewhat more in detail the methods employed by operational research. One basic principle is: collecting the facts. Another principle is: imitation of the process in the form of a model. In the case of the postal services quoted above the operational research will first conduct enquiries to establish the precise figures and data. Then on paper different possible reconstructions of the distribution of personnel will be worked out. Again on paper it will be tried out how this

new distribution will function. From the conclusions arrived at by the simulated new arrangements the most efficient system can be calculated.

It is obvious that in the apostolate there are many areas of which cannot be brought under operational research in any form. The well-known spiritual adage that we do not know how and where grace works, proves this up to the hilt. We know only too well that it is impossible to gauge the effects produced by the preaching of the word in all its many forms. There is in the deepest strata of our soul a realm that cannot be fathomed by any human instrument. Moreover, God's Spirit breaths through human realities in ways that go far beyond our human understanding. It would be simply heretical to reduce the reality of the Church to elements that could be measured or expressed in human words. To this extent there are severe limitations to the use of operational research in the apostolate. On the other hand we should realise that in the Church, in our apostolate and in all its external means, such as institutions, associations, the press, there is an undeniable human element that *does* fall under the guidance of operational research

The applications to pastoral life are numerous. In big city parishes the times of the Holy Masses (with the respective vernaculars) have often been fixed in the remote past and little thought is given to question whether these times correspond to the most efficient time-scheme possible. Operational research in one large city demonstrated that in some parts of the town there was a tendency for the parishioners to go to the late Masses. Some early Masses

were dropped and adjustments were made to give more attention to these Masses which before had been considered the 'appendices of the Sunday morning'. In some neighbouring parishes, with different strata of the population, there proved to be demand for a very early Mass—at 4.30 a.m.—to cater for Sunday tourists who would like to use the Sunday for picnics. It was also found that in this city more than thirty percent of the parishioners attended Mass outside their own parishes for reasons of convenience. By common agreement of all the parish priests the timings of Mass were arranged in such a way that every half hour a Mass was to begin in one or other parish Church. Some parishes agreed to cater for special Masses such as a Mass for Teenagers, a Mass for Daytime Workers, etc. The advantages of this application of operational research soon won over the most severe critics. An interesting finding during this enquiry was that the parish clergy had not anticipated many of the outcomes. They were greatly surprised when presented with the facts produced by statistical methods. Many generally accepted assumptions were completely overthrown in the light of the new information and it enabled the responsible parish priests to plan Masses with a greater sense of justification.

Operational research need not always concern large-scale and complicated processes. There is the simple matter of the Sunday Sermon. Week after week we prepare our Sunday homily without any sure guidance on the effectiveness of our preaching. Our audiences will surely benefit from our preaching to some extent, but are we certain that we provide them with what they need most? How are we to check the impact we are having? In one

way, of course, we will never be able to find out, namely in so far as God's grace and its effectiveness are involved. But what about the human side of our sermon? Are we really effectively communicating? It is extremely difficult to gauge the influence from the reactions of our faithful. They have been trained not to manifest any reaction at all during Mass and it is rare to find spontaneous reactions afterwards. We may, therefore, have to go out of our way to collect data on a more systematic basis. There are very simple and effective methods to help us in this. One approach that has proved rather effective is to enlist the advice of some Catholic Action groups, such as the YCW, Legion of Mary, CSU or the Sodality (preferably more than one). You briefly explain your purpose : you want suggestions on how to make the Sunday sermon more effective. What do people need most ? What type of sermon helped them best ? After introducing the subject it may be good to ask them to think about the matter until the next meeting when you intend to spend fifteen minutes to collect their opinions. The information gathered will be most enlightening. You may be in for surprises. In one case a young assistant found out several facts that had completely escaped him : half the congregation could not hear him properly ; his references to Scripture were lost as they presupposed too much from the audience. He also found that his careful preparation of the sermons was greatly appreciated and that there was a great demand for straightforward explanations of the new stand of the Church in ecumenism, dialogue and freedom of conscience. It is amazing how gladly and how intelligently many lay people will help us to improve on our sermons if only care to enlist their cooperation. Other

methods to achieve this have been : handing slips of paper to all those attending Mass asking for suggestions on making the sermons more effective (the slips of paper are collected immediately after Mass). This method is only practicable in certain circumstances. Then there is the possibility of asking some people, young and old, specialists and those belonging to the middle classes, to be your special 'sermon critics'. You request them to tell you frankly their reactions and recommendations.

There are many congregations of religious that are engaged in the work of education. When pressed to specify their objectives they will define them in certain points such as : formation of our Catholics, serving the country by producing responsible citizens and exercising an indirect apostolate by educating the non-Christian intelligentsia. These objectives merit the highest appreciation. They are, no doubt, worth the enormous amount of personnel and resources which the Church is willing to give to them. But in how far are we effectively reaching our objectives? Is the present set-up of our educational system the most efficient way to achieve the end ? Only operational research can enlighten us on this matter. It has already been called in both by individual schools and by congregations, with some remarkable results. In one educational institute of great repute it was found, to the dismay of the religious community serving it, that both students and lay staff had a completely distorted picture of the motivation of the religious personnel attached to school and college. Many years of close contact with Sisters had not succeeded in opening the eyes of a large section of the non-Christian teachers and pupils to the spiritual motives

for which the sisters did their work. They were under the impression that Religious Sisters group together in common houses to make life easier, to secure good jobs for one another and to escape the burdens of married life. They had learned to respect the Sisters as good teachers, capable organizers and strict disciplinarians, but they had failed to see in them the spiritual, dedicated persons they really were. The objective of doing indirect apostolate was thereby not being obtained. On further inspection it came out that this could be remedied with some minor adjustments : the prayerlife of the Sisters was arranged in such a way that the non-Christian students could witness it better (by making the chapel accessible; by introducing prayer during college hours); readjustments were made to make the Sisters more free to give classes on moral science ; the institute began a concerted policy to stress the motivation of its service (to applicants at the beginning of the school year a leaflet was given to explain the religious motivation for which the Sisters dedicated their lives to education). Operational research was thus a real help to making the Congregation achieve its ends in a more responsible manner.

I believe that the examples enumerated above will amply prove that operational research finds many applications in the pastoral apostolate. In our 'down-to-earth' and 'scientifically-minded' twentieth century the modern pastor cannot overlook the advantages for his apostolate that can be derived from methods that have been developed in the secular field. If it pays to calculate in a highly rationalised way, the number of clerks to be appointed in post-offices all over the country, it will be helpful to us to

adopt similar guidelines in certain aspects of our personnel policy. If secular business invests capital to work out a highly rationalized system of verifying and controlling its successes in marketing toothpaste or cosmetics, it is worth our while to find out more precisely how far we manage to "market" the message entrusted to us. "The children of this world are more intelligent in their own ways than the children of light." The implication is that we should learn from them.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CRITICAL PATH METHOD

"A man may plan his course;
But the Lord directs his steps."

Prov. 16/9

Organization belongs to the apostolate of all layers in the Church. Bishops and their immediate staffs find that much of their time is taken up in organizing meetings, retreats, conferences and seminars. All superiors are continuously engaged in one or other form of organization, whether it be in the line of building, printing or education. Parish priests, heads of institutions, secretaries of associations or directors of service centres : all know by experience what it means to organize a project, large or small. Considering the lack of specialized training in this science of programming and planning, one cannot but be impressed by the excellent performance so often achieved. Many a person proves an efficient organizer by nature, and experience adds a good deal of refinement. But one must also deplore that so often valuable time is wasted, or resources not effectively used, because of the lack of any systematic approach. Many a busy pastor could save himself a lot of time and worrying if he knew some simple but efficient way that would guarantee successful organization.

The secular sciences of management have developed the so-called "critical path method". It is a way of determining the various activities involved in a project and the most efficient way of coordinating them. For the construction of a house various basic materials will have to be procured, such as steel, bricks, concrete and wood. Meanwhile preparations must be made for certain specialized work that will have to be done in one or other particular phase of the building, such as installing the electrical equipment, fitting the frames for the doors and windows, laying the waterpipe and sewage system, and similar jobs. Different firms may be involved. Certain parts of the work cannot be done before others have been completed. All this requires a coordinated plan in which the various activities have been linked so as to finish the building within the shortest period and with the maximum use of the available personnel. The "critical path method" deals with this type of planning.

It seems to me that this method may best be explained by giving a detailed example. Most readers will be familiar with the organizational background of seminars and so we may well take this as our starting point. Suppose that the seminar is going to be conducted for teachers from various districts of a region. Simplifying matters somewhat, we could then distinguish the following activities that go into the preparation :

A. Attracting speakers for the main talks.

B. Sending circulars to find out at what time a maximum of response could be expected, (to fix the most suitable date for the seminar).

C. Raising some initial funds to finance the seminar.

D. Finding suitable accommodation, once the date has been determined, and making provisional bookings.

E. Making provisional arrangements for the catering.

F. Sending final information to the participants, requesting them to confirm their coming and to provide information regarding their arrival and desired transport for departure (for travel arrangements).

G. The stencilling of the talks which the speakers have prepared.

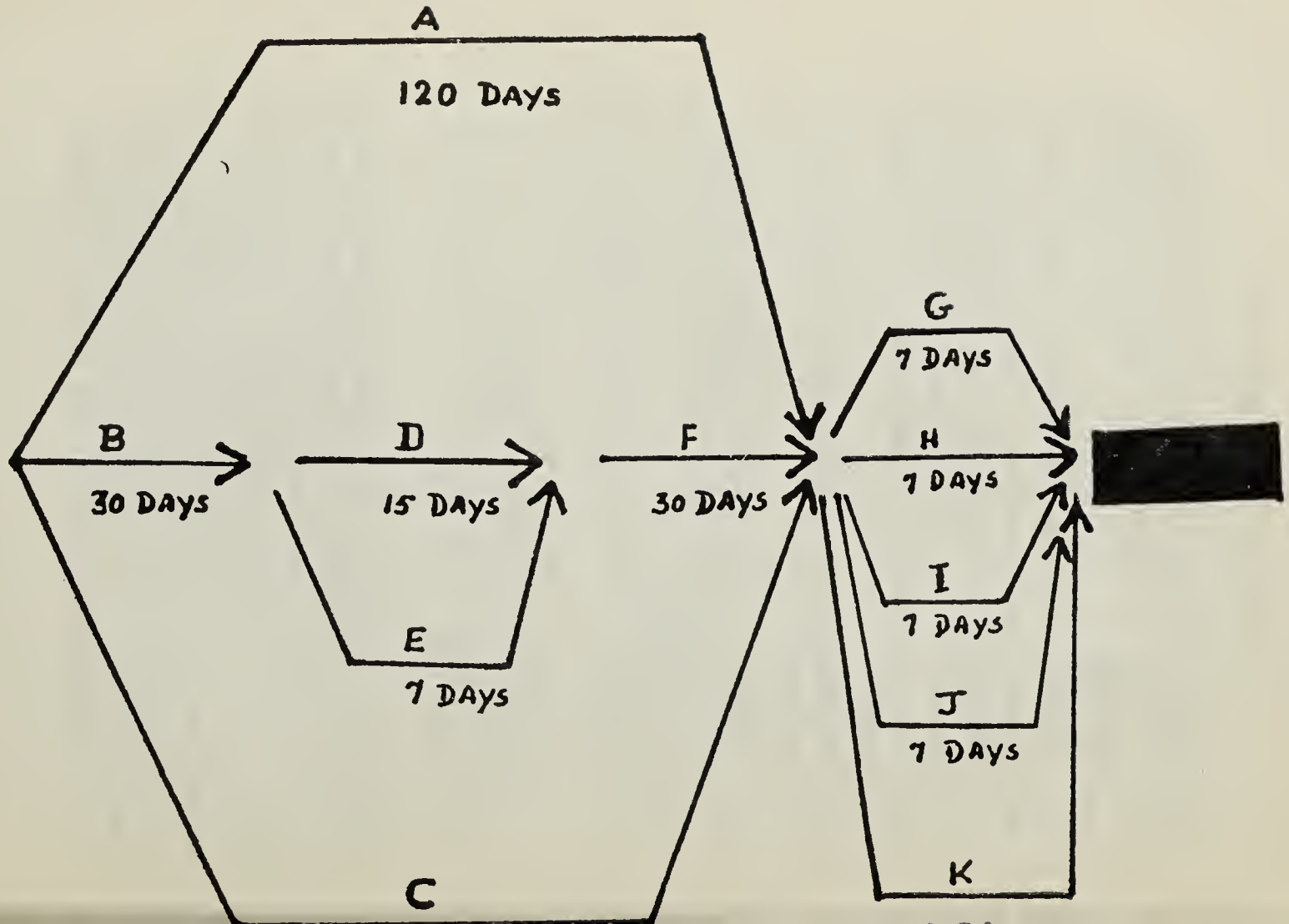
H. Making the final arrangements for accommodation in the light of the precise data regarding the participants.

I. Making the final arrangements with regard to the catering.

J. Doing some final preparations in the line of supplying material for the meetings, etc.

K. Booking the return passages by rail, bus or airways for the participants.

It may be that we would wish to calculate the time we need to prepare for our seminar. The thing to do is to express the activities enumerated above in a scheme such as that found in figure one. The capital letters in the scheme refer to the activities listed. Each letter is attached to a line (an arrow) which signifies the path which this activity has to run through time. With the letter the estimated minimum duration of the activity has also been indicated. A (attracting speakers) will have to be begun at least four


A
120 DAYS
B
30 DAYS
D
15 DAYS
E
7 DAYS
F
30 DAYS
G
7 DAYS
H
7 DAYS
I
7 DAYS
J
7 DAYS
K
C

months in advance (will take 12 days). Sending the circulars (B) will require at least a month to produce the necessary response from the teachers, after which the date can be fixed and the provisional arrangements made (D and E). Collecting the confirmations and final information from the participants again requires at least a month (F). Only after this information is known can the final arrangements (H.I.J.) be made. These, however, would only require about a week each. It is different for the travel arrangements which have to be begun at least fifteen days before the seminar (K). It should be noted also that the speakers have to send the same final information (presumably with their draft) before the last arrangements can be made (therefore A and F meet in the same point). Moreover, the financial preparation must have been realized to some degree at the same time (that is why C concurs with A and F).

So far the explanation of the scheme. But what is its use? First of all, it gives us a clear picture of the minimum time required to prepare for the seminar. Let us have another look at the scheme. The work of contacting and receiving commitments from, the participants (the line running through B, D and F) would only require two and a half months. But raising funds (C) ask three months and booking good speakers (A) four months in advance. During the first period of the preparation, therefore, the "*critical path*" runs through A and so we may conclude that this period will require a minimum time of four months. The second period begins when all the final information from speakers and participants has been collected. The last arrangements of stencilling, providing equipment,

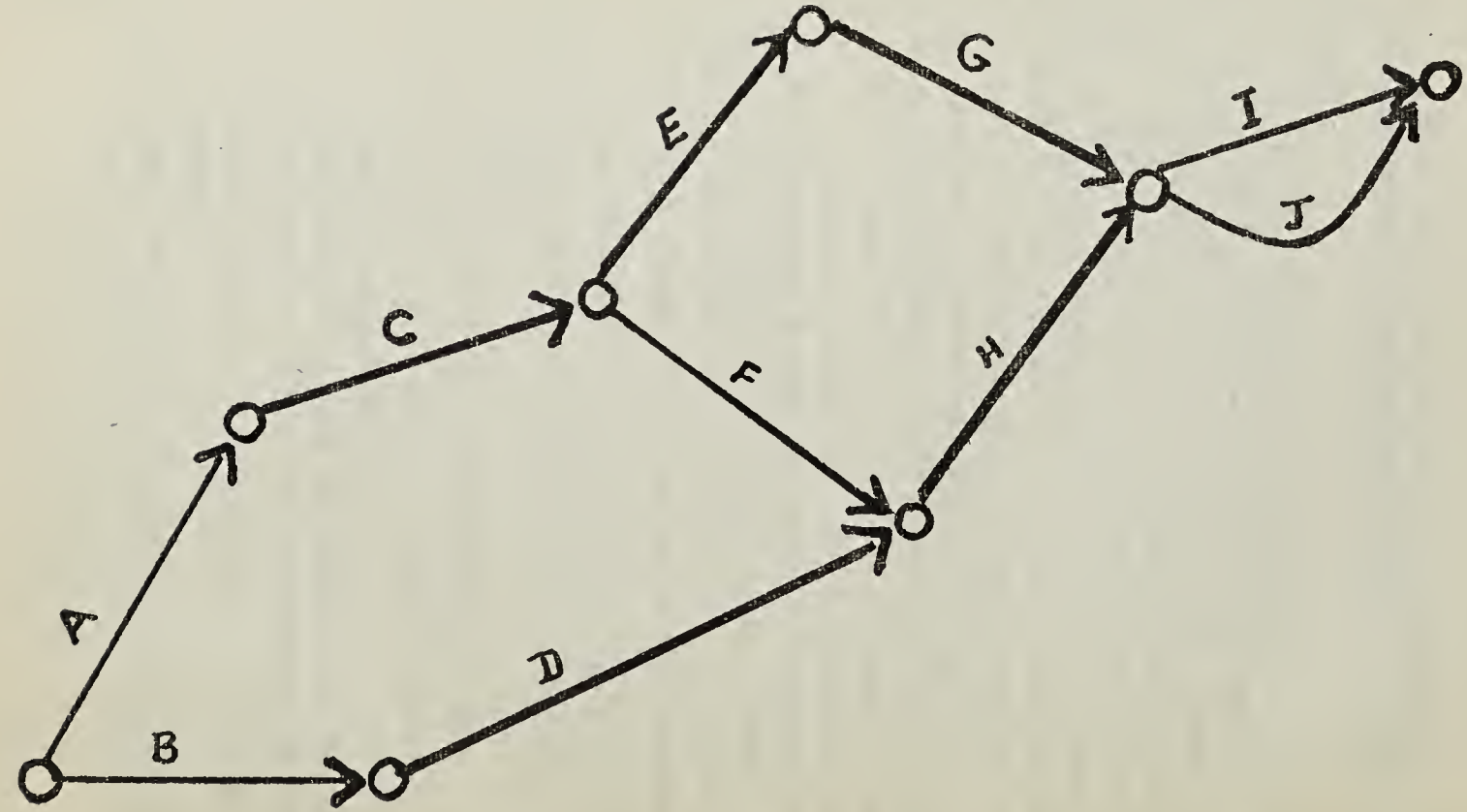
finalizing accommodation and catering would not take more than seven days. But it is foreseen that the booking of return travel will require fifteen days. In the second period the "*critical path*" runs, consequently, through K. In general we can, therefore, conclude that the "critical path" runs through *A and K* and that the total minimum duration of preparation amounts to four and a half months.

The scheme is also helpful in other ways. Knowing the time required for A (the critical path) we can be somewhat more generous in setting the deadlines for activities B, D and F. We can also clearly distinguish the activities that are done parallel and which can be easily shared out to different cooperators. This is especially true for the second period when activities G, H, I, J and K could be executed by various persons and groups. Another advantage lies in the adjustments we will have to make when it turns out that certain activities take more time than expected in the schedule. In all these aspects the advantages are greater the more detailed and complicated our preparation is and the more clearly we have succeeded in expressing it in a comprehensive scheme.

One can also analyse a programme with a slightly different accent. Let us imagine that we have to produce pamphlets on Catholic doctrine in one of the vernaculars. The following activities could be distinguished in such a programme :

A. Formulating the concept of what should be contained in the pamphlet.

B. Formulating the concept of what should be expressed on the front cover.


A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J

C. The actual writing of the text by a recognized author.

D. The drawing of the cover picture by an artist.

E. The reviewing of the text in the light of the proposed concept and in the light of the desired style and reading facility.

F. The adoption of the title of the pamphlet.

G. The acquiring of the acclesiastical "Imprimatur".

H. The cutting of the block for the cover page.

I. The printing and proof-reading of the booklet.

The relationship between these activities could be expressed in terms of intermediate *events, milestones.* On figure 2 we have tried to make the connections visual, admitting at the same time that a different sequence would be possible. As in the previous figure we have symbolized the activities by arrows and labelled them according to the capital letters attributed to each in the list. The 'milestones' have been expressed by small circle. Reading the scheme one may understand how after the formulation of the concept (A), the author can write (B), submit his text for review (E) and obtain the imprimatur (G). Simultaneously the concept for the cover page (B) can have been worked out by an artist (D), and after the title has been determined (F), the block can be made (H). Here both lines (of text and coverblock) converge, so that a beginning can be made with printing (I) accompanied by proof-reading (J).

The time element of this scheme is difficult to fix beforehand. It is important that the process should *move on* to

prevent unnecessary delay. To achieve this the general editor has some activities in his own hand (such as formulating the concepts (A, B), fixing the title (F) and the proofreading (J). For the other activities he depends on specialists : the author (C), the artist (D), the language reviewer (E), the censor (G), the blockmaker (H) and the printer (I). To achieve a maximum of efficiency the editor will have to dispose of a number of alternative cooperators for each of these specializations. This is all the more necessary as he will not have just one, but a whole series of pamphlets on his programme. Experience will show him where bottlenecks are likely to occur: with the authors, the artists, the printers, etc. and for these specializations he will therefore have to attract more cooperators.

In all similar kinds of programming one should note that there are three basic elements that make up its composition ;

a—time ;

b—resources (personnel, finance, etc.) ;

c—different activities.

There is a basic rule of efficiency that states that each of these elements can be determined if the other two have been fixed. For instance, if we know the activities that are involved in the bringing out of a pamphlet (c) and we can determine with precision the resources (personnel and finance) at our disposal (b), we can calculate the time it will take to produce it (a). If the time element becomes so important that we want it to be reduced to a minimum (the pamphlet must appear within three days), then we achieve this

to raise the resources (personnel, finance) to a maximum. Or again, suppose that we have been given a certain time-limit (a) and we have a very restricted promise of resources (b), then our activities towards the production will have to be regulated accordingly (we might have to omit the picture on the cover, etc.). Real efficiency will be achieved if we make use of all three elemts to our greatest advantage.

The "critical path" method has many applications in the pastoral field. It could well serve to clarify the cooperation between various Catholic institutes in the bringing about of a common project. It can be handled by the parish priest who is forced by circumstances to plan the building of his Church all by himself. It can be the guideline in the long-term planning required for lectures given by a series of persons, correspondence courses, fund-raising campaigns and lay apostolate formation programmes. It is a new technique and it may, therefore, require some time before we have learned to handle it swiftly and with ease. But if we accustom ourselves to adopt it, it will certainly prove a great help to us in every stage of our planning.

Chapter Four

STRATEGY

"A sensible man foresees danger and protects himself against it; but the simple pass on and are punished."

Prov. 27/12

Decisions in life concern the future. It is still relatively easy to take decisions if we know for sure what is to take place. If we have to travel from Dehra Dun to Bombay, we can without any difficulty take the decision (*i*) to take the Express that goes from Dhra Dun to Delhi ; (*ii*) to stay in New Delhi for one day ; (iii) to start on the journey from Delhi to Bombay on the day that follows. Given the fixed time-table of the railways, we can then arrange for all the future activities ; book the places in the two Expresses, and write for accommodation in both Delhi and Bombay. But it may be that there are uncertainties regarding the journey;we may not be sure whether the post will reach in time; there may be communal trouble in Delhi which has caused all train services to be cancelled and we do not know whether the services will be normalized by the time we intend to travel. In such cases decisions become more complicated. They will involve calculation and risk.

Uncertainties beset the pastor in every field of his activity. If anywhere in human life, it is in the apostolate that this limiting factor is experienced. We have to start on great projects without precisely being able to foresee all its implications. As a matter of fact, the very concept of the apostolate includes this element of uncertainty. A priest, a religious or a lay apostle commits himself to God, each one in his own sphere, without yet being able to realize fully the sacrifices that will be demanded. It is the call of Christ which beckons us to follow in His footsteps to a future that is no longer entirely our own. In the life of apostles of later times we find repeated that pattern of discipleship initiated by Our Lord Himself. One should study the repeated invitations to Peter. "Come, follow Me", said Christ, "And I will make you a fisher of men !" (Mk 1: 17). Surely Peter did not foresee what this 'fishing for men' would come to mean in his life! When John's mother approaches Jesus with her ambitious request, Jesus says to Peter : "Can you drink the chalice I am going to drink?" Peter answers, "Yes, I can!" (Mt 20: 22), but he could not realise what this chalice would contain for him. After the resurrection Jesus tells Peter : "When you were young, you used to gird yourself and go where you pleased, but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you and take you where you do not wish to go!" And St. John adds : "He said this to show the kind of death by which Peter was to honour God!" (Jn 21 : 18). Even at this stage Peter did not know much more than his life would be one of total service and final martyrdom. The life of Peter is followed in the example of priests, religious even lay apostles who make a very courageous decision by their total commit-

ment to God that involves a long and unknown future.

The followers of Christ are by nature and by grace courageous persons. Their very decision to follow Christ and to take upon themselves heavy tasks and responsibilities for His sake proves this abundantly. The history of the Church, with its unending flow of martyrs, witnesses, heralds of the gospel, pioneers in every field of Christian charity, testifies to it. It is not by lack of courage then that difficult decisions in the apostolate are delayed. It is rather on account of intellectual doubts and by the lack of sure guidelines for action that decisions have often been stalled or suspended. Especially in the complicated structure of modern society with its new spheres of life in the press, radio, and film, with its shift to new social patterns in industrialization and nation-wide politics, with its remarkably fast changes in religious climate and public opinion, it has become more and more difficult to formulate clear plans for the future. The rapidity of life has taken the Church by surprise. We have been used to work at straight forward, simple programmes that could be foreseen twenty years in advance. The present-day world does not seem to present a stable basis for even the first five or ten years to come.

The concept of strategy fits into this context. Originally strategy denoted the art of foreseeing battle in advance and arranging the troops in such a way that the situation would be most advantageous to the strategist. In modern terminology the term has been extended to all fields where it necessary to take decisions that involve some uncertain future elements. Business, politics and modern

warfare have developed highly polished techniques of strategy. Let us take a simple example. The management of a journal sees the possibilities of increasing the number of pages of the daily by four and raising the price by two paise. It is foreseen that this will enhance the circulation and thus also the cost advertisements will go up. There will be an allround gain, even after deduction of the special expenses that will have to be made to increase production. There is, however, an uncertain element in the future. The government is considering raising the taxes on paper considerably. It is not known whether this new law will come through or not. If it does, it will no longer pay to have extra pages, in fact there may be losses. The management could, ofcourse, in case the law comes through switch back to a smaller-size edition. This switch-back would imply certain losses.

What decision should be taken?

It should be noted that the decision must foresee the future and must already lay down now what will be done, whether the law comes through or not. There are eight possible events, which we will characterize with certain letters : I (increase), N (normal). In between the two letters indicating these alternative activities we will put whether the law is passed (p) or not (n) :

N (n) N 1. Keep the edition *normal.* If the law is *not* passed, keep it *normal.*

N (n) I 2. Keep the edition *normal.* If the law is *not* passed, *increase.*

N (p) N 3. Keep the edition *normal.* If the law is *passed* keep it *normal.*

N (p) I 4. Keep the edition *normal*. If the law is *passed*, *increase*

I (n) N 5. *Increase* the edition. If the law is *not passed*, switch to *normal*.

I (n) I 6. *Increase* the edition, If the law is *not* passed, keep the *increase*.

I (p) N 7. *Increase* the edition. If the law is *passed*, switch to *normal*.

I (p) I 8. *Increase* the edition. If the law is *Passed*, keep the *increase*.

It will be seen immediately that not each of these eight theoretical possibilities will have the importance. No man in his sense would follow no. 4 (N (p)I) or no. 5 (I (n) N), but for the sake of completeness we can leave them in.

Our next step after having determined all the possibilities, is to calculate what our gains or losses would be if any of these eight alternative courses of events were to happen. For example, if course 7 is followed (Increase now, but the law is passed and switch back), then the over-all loss will be Rs. 10,000. If we calculate all the eventual gains or losses we might get this survey:

N (n) N	0	N (p) N	0
N (n) I	Rs. 20,000	N (p) I	Rs. 30,000
I (n) N	Rs. 10,000	I (p) N	Rs. 10,000
I (n) I	Rs. 40,000	I (p) I	Rs. 5,000

This survey is called the *"pay off matrix"* as it indicates how each course of events would eventually 'pay off'. Now

it does not need much thought to see what decision the management should take in this case. N (p) I would be mere loss. Keeping the edition normal whatever happens (N (n) N and N (p) N), brings neither gain nor loss. Keeping the edition normal until it is known that the law will not come through, will only bring Rs. 20,000 and that conditionally (N (n) I). The management will have to take *the following strategical decision* :

(*a*) Increase the edition now.

(*b*) If the law is not passed, maintain the increase. This will give a total gain of Rs. 40,000. (I (n) I).

(*c*) If the law will be passed, switch back to normal. This will in any case have brought in *Rs.* 10,000 in gain (I (p) N).

The above example shows the essence of a good decision. It is based on facts. It enumerates and tries out all alternatives. It determines now what will be done in the eventuality of the unfavourable law coming through. It is also good to reflect on it from this angle. Taking no decision at all, is in fact also a decision. For it reduces the activity to N(n)N and N(p)N.

In business it is to some extent easy to express the relative advantages of different courses of events, since it can be put in concrete figures (money values) as the result. This will not always be possible for those who have to take strategic decisions in the apostolate. Let us take another rather simple example. Four Sisters have finished their novitiate and have to receive their first appoint-

ment. Suppose that their names are Maria, Gabriella, Liduina and Theodosia. The novice mistress and the other who have been giving instruction to them, have subjected these sisters to various tests and have tried to evaluate their capacities by a mark (which for the sake of convenience we may suppose to range from 1 to 10). Suppose again that there are four different branches of study to which these sisters would need to be appointed : Arts (English), Theology, Social Service and Medicine. The follwing rough scheme of evaluations could be at Mother Provincial's disposal:

SISTERS

	Maria	Gabri-ella	Liduina	Thoe-dosia
Power of thinking (Catholic doctrine, Philosophy)	6	8	6	7
Exact sciences	3	8	5	7
Languages	4	7	5	9
Sociability (Human relations)	6	9	6	7

Mother provincial might want to calculate how she can obtain the best results from all four sisters seen as one team. Sisters Gabriella and Theodosia excel in most aspects, Maria comes last in almost everything. Mother provincial will have to try to find a solution that will satisfy the needs to the obtainable maximum. If we allow ourselves to be guided by the mathematical figures, the selection

would fall on Maria for Social Service (mark 6), on Gabriella for Medicine (mark 8), on Liduina for Theology (mark 6) and on Theodosia for Languages (mark 9). For some of the sisters the studies assigned to them are not according to their individual highest ability, but the sum total of the appointments indicate the highest output for the whole team (namely 6 and 8 and 6 and 9 is : 29). This is, from a mathematical point of view the optimal solution.

I must hasten, however, to point out that this 'mathematical approach' should on no account settle the matter. Mother provincial should realize that there are other factors to be considered that may prove of greater importance. One such factor is the human element. Does the person appointed have a natural liking for this type of work ? Gabriella may possess the ability to do the exact sciences well, but this does not automatically prove that she could temperamentally be a good medical doctor. Personnel planning, moreover, should not be done on a mere annual basis. If long-term planning is done in advance, it will be far easier to give people appointments in harmony both with their personal temperament and their special talents. In spite of all these restrictive remarks, there is no harm in approaching appointments in a more systematic fashion. Appointments are always strategic decisions as they involve some uncertain future development. Appointments, whether of diocesan clergy or of religious, also have the characteristic of having to be done within the context of a complex need. A well-defined number of new personnel will have to fill an equally well-defined number of places. For this reason the technique illustrated above will have its use if kept within the proper perspective.

Another example may be taken from rapidly expanding cities. The continuous migration of labour into the cities makes it more than likely that the city will increase in the same proportion for some years to come. It is foreseen that many of the new settlers will be Catholics who come in from the districts. To make everything even more certain, we have the government's five years' and ten years' plans containing programmes for increasing the industry of the city very rapidly. Suppose a bishop in such a city is aware of the need for buying ground in view of the future parishes that are bound to be in demand after ten years. Now land is still very cheap. Within a matter of years the price may jump by leaps and bounds. However, it is not certain in which direction the town is going to extend. Buying a plot of ground in a place which will later be miles away from the town, does not seem to be wise. What to do ? The bishop entrusts a small team of specialists with the task of advising him on the matter.

The team might submit the following report: there are five sites outside the city that would come into consideration as prospective plots for future parish Churches : *Plot A* (two miles to the North-East); *Plot B* (three miles to the South); *Plot C* (two and a half miles to the South-West); *Plot D* (four miles to the South-East) and *Plot* E (three miles to the North). The team reports that it is impossible to foresee yet in which direction the city will eventually expand. It advises the bishop to buy all the plots at once, for the simple reason that it will save the Church much money in the long run, whatever is going to happen. This could be made clear by the following "pay off matrix" prepared by them, in which they calculated the present price

of the plots, and the value of the plots in 1975 both in case the plot will fall within the extended city area (E) or not (n) : (we keep the figures low as they represent 'minimum plots')

	1969		1975
	Rs.		Rs.
Plot A	3,000	n	3,000
		E	30,000
Plot B	6,500	n	6,500
		E	45,000
Plot C	4,000	n	4,000
		E	35.000
Plot D	4,500	n	4,500
		E	4.5000
Plot E	5,300	n	5,300
		E	50,000
Total	23,300		

The bishop will have to invest Rs. 23,300 now. Even if only one of the plots were to fall within the extended city area, he would save the diocese at least Rs. 30,000 (for plot A) or as much as Rs. 50,000 (for Plot E). And it is very likely that two or three plots will fall within the city extension. The amount saved will then be really worthwhile. The

bishop is therefore fully justified in buying all the five plots in a true strategical decision that takes future undetermined factors into account.

It stands to reason that the Church will gain much from intelligent strategical decisions. Many far-sighted decisions of the last decade have already brought innumerable advantages to the apostolate. In the pressure of the circumstances an increasing demand will be made on pastors, superiors and leaders to make courageous decisions that will rest on solid information and on a thorough evaluation of the possible alternatives.

Chapter Five

IMAGE

"A good name is more desirable than great riches; a good reputation than silver and gold."

Prov. 22/1

"Image came into being as a side-product of the complicated structure of society. A man knows his father and mother, his wife and his children so well that with regard to them there cannot be a question of "image". But there are other people whom he does not know so intimately, with whom he enjoys only a passing contact. Those people, like the king of former times, or the Prime Minister of our own days, will leave a superficial impression on him. If the impression is gradually taking some definite characteristics, we can speak of an image. Napoleon, for instance, enjoyed the "image" of being a fabulous general. Few people had met him, but the many stories regarding his military skills very soon accumulated into a well-defined picture, an "image" that Napoleon would never lose. It was through this "image" that Napoleon could so easily regroup his army in the famous "Hundred-Days" after his escape from Elba.

It is the merit of modern business to have discovered

how strong the influence of the "image" can be. German machines and engines have slowly built up the public image of being very solid and dependable. Every German firm is enjoying a great advantage on account of this, since people, when choosing between, let us say, a German and a Danish engine, will generally prefer to take the German one. It is not the qualities of the product in hand, but the "image" which proves decisive in many cases. This is all the more important as few people realise that they are motivated by this "image". It has a subconscious influence that can be stronger than explicit arguments. The advertising branch has proved this in many very striking cases. A certain firm produced transistor radios for many years. In order to increase the sales the price of the transistors was bought down by 20%. Contrary to expectation, the sales went down. Investigation showed that a good transistor has the "image" of being expensive. When the firm increased the prices once more, the sales rose considerably.

It is good, from the outset, to have a clear idea about the way the "image" functions on the borderline between the conscious and the subconscious. "Image". means for people a kind of certainty about the nature and qualities of a person, an object or an institution which they often cannot put into words, but which affects them to a great extent. In order to facilitate matters for busy housewives, certain firms produced ready-made soups in tins which needed only to be mixed with water and heated. It was found that the product was not sold according to expectation. The reason proved to be very subtle. Most women have an "image" of a housewife as a person who has to work for

the rest of the family. The over-simple procedure of making soup left them with a subconscious guilt-complex. When the procedure of making soup had been presented in a more complicated fashion (add salt; stir the mixture for five minutes; etc.) the sales went up a good deal — a good example of how the "image" can make people take decisions of which they do not grasp the full motivation.

For the apostolate the "image" of the Church, of priests, religious and institutions is also of the greatest importance. It is a well-known fact that Catholic schools and colleges have the "image" of being exemplary in discipline. It is one of the reasons why so many parents, even non-Christians, will gladly send their children to our schools. They do not know the present management of the school, perhaps, but they go by the "image" which our schools acquired in the course of time. In some parts of the country the Church has the "image" of being composed almost entirely of persons belong to the lowest classes in society. The Church has in those regions acquired a "low caste image" which will make it very difficult for high caste people to accept it. This resistance by the high caste people, it should be stressed, will often not be explicit or reflected on. It will work as a subconscious repugnance that will prevent them from ever to thinking seriously of joining the Church.

It is difficult to assess the precise "image" which the Catholic Church or its member have acquired with people. On the whole it would seem that it is a good image. The real service, the works of charity, the thoroughness of our

institutions have built up an image that will surely bring many people to appreciate the message of salvation which the Church is bringing. It is not my task here, however, to discuss the actual image of the Church, be it good, bad or indifferent. It seems to me that it is more useful to learn from the secular science of advertising how an image is formed, and how we can improve the image of the Church and of the priest, the religious and the lay Christian. The money spent on analysing the process of "image-making" by big firms all over the world can avail us a good deal in presenting Christ better to our surroundings. The purpose of improving our image should be not to make ourselves look better than what we are, but to make sure that people really understand what we are and what we stand for. In this we will do what Christ told us to do when He said : "Do not put your light under the bushel, but place it on the lampstand!" And He added the express purpose of projecting a good image : "that people may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in Heaven !" (Mt 5:15-16) We have to be like a city built on a hill that cannot remain hidden! Let us then listen to the advice that secular advertising can give us on this matter.

First rule : The "Image" comes about by what people see

It is not by chance that Christ in the text quoted above lays stress on people's *seeing* : "That they may *see* your good works....." People judge persons and things from what they see. It is remarkable how the visual perception of a thing can even overshadow a lot of intellectual motivation. Advertizing has proved this abundantly. Customers who buy books presumably are in want of some kind

of intellectual food. One would expect that the choice of book would be determined almost exclusively by the contents of the book. Advertising shows that the outward appearance of the book has a disproportionately great influence on the selection made by the buyers. A colourful cover is almost a must. People get an "image" of the book from what they see in its outward appearance and they buy accordingly.

Some forty years ago even giant firms did not pay much attention to this aspect of image making. Now they have learned by experience that people judge the products by what they see of the firm. The representatives of the firm have to be immaculately dressed. They have to display expensive cars. The offices and service centers that are open to public inspection have to present a picture of decency and cleanliness. The product itself must be handsome and must have an 'efficient' look. Motor cars are, no doubt, also judged on the value of the engine; yet the customer will gather his first impression of the car's decency and reliability from the outward appearance of the chassis. It is the outward appearance on which people base their judgements. A furniture industry in Germany once conducted an extensive enquiry to determine the factors on which people base their respect for persons they meet. The results indicated that 43% of the people put a man's clothe as the most important single factor. In other words: people judge a person first and foremost by the clothes he is wearing.

One consequence for the apostolate is that our parishioners, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, will judge the

priests and the religious working in the parish by the clothes they are wearing. I do not want to enter the discussion as to whether the cassock should be maintained or any dress introduced. The important thing is to recognize the clothing of our personnel as a matter of primary influence on the image. Obviously the dress should be recognized as designating the persons concerned as being in God's service. But, even more so, the dress—whether the cassock or anything else—should be neat and such to inspire people with respect. This, perhaps, will also explain why the question of the 'cassock' has remained for such a long time of spontaneous topic of endless discussion.

This leads us to another point. In some enquiries among our Catholics complaints have been registered about the "big, luxurious buildings" in which religious live and the "expensive cars" used by some bishops. It is well-known to insiders that a rigid apostolic poverty can be lived and is lived within the walls of many of these so-called "luxurious buildings". The car that pays off best in the long run may be the expensive car. People's judgement can be entirely ill-founded in ascribing the size of the building or the shape of the car to a lack of apostolic detachment. Yet, we should not forget that our people do not have much more to judge by. They have to judge by what they see and thus they will spontaneously acquire an "image" that will put the Church in a wrong light. It is a point to remember in our planning and a point that should be counteracted by a good explanation as to *why* a certain building has to be big or *why* a vehicle has to be of this or that type.

We may do well to look at ourselves and at our insti-

tutions from the angle of an outsider, or even a casual passer-by. What is it that will strike him ? What is the first impression he will get from our equipment and from the objects that catch his eye ? There is no need for hiding things that we really need in the apostolate, even expensive equipment. But is it obvious to our parishioners or other visitors that it has such a function ? If not, we do well to think of the wrong "image" we may be projecting and the means to remedy this.

Second Rule: The "Image" arises from association of thought

Human memory works with associations. When we hear a certain tune, our mind jumps to a friend of ours who always hums this same tune. When someone cracks a joke our mind immediately recalls a smaller joke we have heard on a previous occasion. The association of thought may be so deeply seated that we simply cannot distinguish or separate two different things in our memory. The experiment of Pavlov shows a curious parallel example from the animal world. If dogs are given food for some days with the accompaniment of the ringing of a bell, the dogs start reacting to food—by the flow of saliva in their mouths—at the ringing of the bell alone. The association of the sound of the bell and the food is so strong that they produce a common reaction. All the training of animals is based on this association, and our own process of learning—even though on a higher level—similarly works on the basis of associations.

The "Image" of a person or an object depends to a large extent on the associations that come to our mind when we

come into contact with it. Advertising has understood this very well and has gone to unbelievable extremes of securing desirable associations for certain products. A chemical drug for calming the nerves will be presented in the context of a person suffering badly from a headache and recovering through taking the drug. The advertisements do not give the scientific grounds which should convince people of the drug's potency. They rather try to make people associate the pain and the relief with the drug. When the pain occurs, people will spontaneously take to the drug. Even if they have no experience of the drug's effectiveness, they will readily advise their friends to make use of it. Advertising has then successfully associated the drug with the kind of relief people want.

A clear example of an image that came about by association is the case of atomic power. The scientific process that makes it possible to split atoms and so release immeasurable quantities of energy, has by itself no relation to the concept of war. It so happened that this invention was made use of for the first time in the Second World War with the horrible bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ever since that time atomic power has been associated in people's minds with war and destruction. It has even acquired associations of 'injustice', 'cruelty' and 'brute force'. Strictly speaking the associations are not well founded. The course of history may prove atomic power to be the greatest source of peaceful energy man has ever uncovered. It will be difficult, however, to change the image which atomic power has obtained through the association with war.

In pastoral life images are also made through associa-

tions. Recent investigations have shown that to many non-Catholics priests and sisters do not have the image of being religious persons, dedicated to a spiritual ideal. In some rural areas the priest is associated with relief work or with building projects. In educational institutions religious are associated with the externals of discipline: administration, punishments, examinations. It is not difficult to understand how such 'images' arise. If people always meet a priest on the level of a organization and building, or a sister on the level of school discipline, unwanted associations will necessarily be created. Among our Catholics this is less likely to happen. They meet their priests frequently in the context of Holy Mass, catechetical instruction, pastoral visitation and the administration of the sacraments. For them it will be easy to associate the priest with spiritual work. But it is not superfluous for many a busy priest and religious to examine the associations of thought which his or her life will provoke in the minds of our non-Christian neighbours. Are we aware of the undesirable aspects which such associations of thought may attach to our image?

In some regions of India evangelization has only been successful among the lower classes of society. Christ calls all men into His Kingdom and it is no more than our duty to welcome those from the less fortunate communities into the Church. A rather unacceptable by product of such one-sided evangelization however has been the emerging of a "low caste image" for Christians. It is not easy to see how this can be counter-acted, but it is certain that something must be done about it. As long as this image remains attached to the Church, a psychological block will prevent many

willing high-caste persons from following Christ. Much depends here on the region, and determined campaigns can do much to reverse the trend. Business again shows us the way. In quite a few firms low-grade images have successfully been upgraded by a wise policy of public relations. On a regional level steps could be taken to make people understand that the Church is equally acceptable to high caste persons. In some areas it has been found helpful to publish booklets containing the lives of high-caste converts. High-caste Christians have been given prominence in public functions. Priests have been encouraged to make more contacts with the upper classes. Such action, if pursued with some steadfastness, will help to dissociate our image from one particular community.

Association of thought has in some educational institutes doomed all catechetical instruction to failure. It cannot be denied that in the eyes of pupils the strictness of examinations and the disciplinary interest of the principal are the norms by which subjects are judged. Classes receive their image from this. In some schools the lack of interest in catechetical instruction has not escaped the notice of the students. Instead of being associated with some worthwhile work, catechism class has been linked in their minds with "the last hour", "the hour which the principal drops first", "the class for which we need not study". As a consequence the image of catechism class has become such that it is morally impossible for the teacher to be taken seriously. Far be it from me to make a plea for strict disciplinary penalties to inforce attention during catechism class. It is to be hoped that the teacher will give his classes in such a captivating way that the children will

associate catechetical instruction with a time they enjoy. All I want to stress is that the "image" of our doctrinal classes will, to some extent, determine their success and that this image normally rises from associations of thought.

In former years we used to speak of the "sacrament of the dying". Roman instructions have introduced the more appropriate name of "the sacrament of the sick". Extreme Unction (to call it by its old name) was associated in people's mind with death. For this reason relatives of a dying person often felt reluctant to call a priest. The new image of this sacrament will surely remove psychological obstacles from people's minds. It is good for the Church to be conscious of the need to counteract such wrong images which have arisen through unwanted associations of thought.

Third Rule: Images crystalize around persons

It seems to be a common pattern of human thinking to simplify complicated structures into concrete notions. And what is more concrete to us than a human person ? The phenomenon of 'personification' has thus become a very natural thing in every day life. We have grown accustomed to think of India—that vast continent, with its sixteen states and its numerous populations—as "Mother India". In other words we have personified India and it helps us to think about India in that way. In the same way we speak about "Mother Church", about "Uncle Sam" (the U.S.A.) and so on. Business has discovered that this tendency may be helpful to give people a sense of belonging. It has purposely introduced personifications to encourage people

to think of a firm or a company in terms of a living person. A great firm in Germany is introducing a type of shoe which it wants to present as the shoe that is made for difficult feet. The shoe has been called "Dr. Schroder's shoe". In all advertisements a photograph of Dr. Schroder is shown in which he advises people with difficult feet to try 'his' shoe. In actual fact thousands of employees are involved in producing the shoe, but to the general public it will be the personal advice of Dr. Schroder. In Magazines for women it is customary to leave some columns for "replies to readers' difficulties". The Magazine will print a photograph of an elderly lady, who will be called something like "Aunt Margaret", and the reading public will be under the impression that they are submitting their difficulties to Aunt Margaret and that she is sending them a personal reply. In reality there may be a staff of ten efficient men or women who do all the answering, under the same blanket name "Aunt Margaret". Most likely people would not dream of writing about their difficulties to a board of experts. The picture of "Aunt Margaret" has helped them to personify the board and so it has become acceptable.

In the last example we can see how the image of a magazine, or of its 'problem section', has been crystalized around "Aunt Margaret". The Congress Party with its many members and its wide variety of programmes all over the country only became tangible to the people in persons such as Gandhi and Nehru. The image of the Congress Party crystalized around them. In people's mind all the properties of Gandhi and Nehru were subconsciously attributed to the Congress Party itself. John F. Kennedy has done more for the U.S.A. than any other President, because of his

immense popularity all round the world. The United States itself received a new 'image' in the eyes of the world through him. In this way leading figures that are associated with a movement or organization can give a very personal and substantial imprint to the image which that movement or organization projects.

In the context of the Church we can observe the same phenomenon. The Catholic Church was considered very much a 'closed community' by our separated brethren until the coming of John XXIII. Little did they know about our Prayer Week for Christian Unity, about our sincere intentions for renewal and about the profound desire for reunion, that was alive in the Catholic Church. Pope John did more than activate and stimulate such latent desire. By his personal involvement he projected a new 'image' of ecumenism that has greatly reversed the antipathies of Protestants of all denominations. The image of the Catholic Church has in this way been corrected in no small degrees. The present Holy Father has also done very much to project a good image for the Church. His insistent demands for world justice and his obvious concern for the poor and the downtrodden have put the whole Church in a new light. It stands to reason that in our ecumenical approach or in the socio-economic apostolate we should give ample scope to a wider appreciation of the ideals that persons such as Pope John and Pope Paul stand for.

Chaplains involved in the student world know that there is still a widespread uneasiness about the relationship between faith and science. For many of our Catholic boys and girls in colleges and tutorial institutes the questions

of evolution, of secular science as opposed to religion and of an atheistic solution to the world, are more than abstract notions in a handbook. They are real problems to them and students even if they cannot always give full expression to it, are quite frequently harbouring the fundamental doubt whether a true scientist should or should not accept religion. In this area of discussion it is very helpful to highlight certain great personalities, in whom the true stand of the Church can convincingly be demonstrated. Father Teilhard de Chardin, an eminent scientist and yet a priest and theologian, will project an image of the Church which combines appreciation of science and acceptance of revelation in a very harmonious way. Dr. von Braun, the scientist who designed the Atlas Rocket that carried the first satellites into space, is a practising and convinced Catholic. Our publications and conferences aimed at the student world should make the most of such persons. This will help to create in their minds the correct image of the Church.

Take the problem of the so-called "Westernized Look" of the Church in India. Even many educated persons consider Christians to be unloyal or somewhat unreliable citizens of the country. Somewhere at the back of their minds they have the idea that Indians who become Christians have turned their back on their motherland and have submitted to foreign ideals and influences. It is not easy to describe all the elements that go into this picture of being a 'foreign Church', but one thing is certain—the presence of so many 'foreign missionaries has influenced the formation of this image. In many areas the Church itself is personified by the foreign missionary himself, be it for better or for worse. In some local languages Christianity is referred to

as the 'white swamy's religion'. In the historical development of the missions this could hardly have been avoided. It is, however, high time for us to take note of it. In line with the wise policies advocated by the Holy See for many years, the local superiors and key persons should be Indians whenever this is possible. It is my personal opinion that the present situation of the Church in India compares rather favourably with the situation prevailing in some Protestant communities. We may be rightly proud of having two Cardinals in the country, who are both admitted to be Indians to the marrow of their bones and at the same time recognised as the leading figures in the international Church. Most of our dioceses are governed by Indian bishops. This has already done much to destroy the false image of foreignness still attaching to Christianity. It is hoped that in the future the prudent use of personnel will improve in the image of the Church yet further in this aspect.

A last thought on the function of persons in projecting images: One of the vital needs of the Church today lies in the field of vocations. But let us remember that few, very few boys and girls are attracted to abstract ideals of the priesthood or the religious life. Vocation enquiries have proved beyond any doubt that it was meeting a zealous priest or a dedicated sister that most frequently sparked off the idea of following such a vocation. The image of the priesthood and of the religious life is inseparably tied to the actual persons living those ideas. A correct image for vocations cannot come about except through the example which we give in our lives. No literature programme, no school retreat or vocation drive can make up for this. It is seeing us and our idealism that will attract youth to

follow Christ more closely. Lives of the saints are also helpful for the same reason: they project the ideals of the priesthood and the religious life in living persons. The correct image will crystallize around these persons.

From a theological point of view there is much that still needs be investigated in this matter of the image. It is quite clear that 'image' plays a major role in the economy of salvation. Sacred Scripture has been inspired by God with the purpose of preserving for all times the correct image of His salvation. To give expression to this image, to make it concrete for us, He made the Scriptures concentrate on persons. Most of all, revelation and salvation was expressed to us in the person of Jesus Christ, who is both the 'image' of the Father (Hebr. 1/3) and the 'image' of redeemed mankind (1 Cor 15/48-49). Apart from all the other theological grounds for doing so, we have in this one more reason to preach Christ, rather than Christianity. The true image of Christianity coincides with Him.

Fourth Rule: Images thrive on names and slogans

What we repeat often enough will stick in the mind. Business advertising has registered great successes by the skilled manipulation of carefully chosen slogans and phrases.

"Smoke Chesterfield—the famous taste of New York".

"Charminar, your cigarette, the greatest cigarette in India."

"Ferofan shirts, shirts for men with elegance !"
"Himalaya—the cream for youth and beauty !"

The strange thing about this aspect of advertising is that we are all aware of being brain-washed and yet we fall into the trap. The name or the slogan will create an 'image' in our mind which we subconsciously accept as correct. If we were logical, we would have to reject all those pretended virtues and qualities of advertized products as 'not having been proved', since the claim to much qualities is made by the producers themselves. In fact we do not stop to make such judgements, but store in our minds the images which the advertisements are hoping to build up.

Names can brand a person or object immediately as belonging to a certain category. Our Christian names, for instance, sound absolutely foreign to Indian ears, at least in quite a few parts of the country. A person carrying such a name will thereby subconsciously be branded as foreign himself—a valid argument at least to consider the serious proposals made in some quarters, of finding genuine Indian equivalents for our Christian names. It would help to free the Church from its "westernized" image to some degree. More serious seems to me the continued use of such anachronisms as calling our parish Churches "missions" and our clergy "missionaries". In some parts of the country, it is still the custom to employ the term "Roman Catholic Mission" as the general denominator for all parish headquarters. It is used as the postal address and for other administrative purposes. This practice continues even where Indian personnel has taken over. It seems advisable to drop such names and terms, as the word

'mission' has connotations (of foreignness, of intrusion, etc.) which are highly undesirable for the image of the Church. And what about the practice of giving English names to our institutions? Why should we speak of the "Sacred Heart Hospital"? Could we not better give it an appropriate Indian name? Why speak of "Seminary", a term totally unintelligible to all outsiders, and not of a "Gurukula-vidyalayam", of which the meaning will be immediately clear to all? A thorough revision of our policy regarding names would very much improve our image in the non-Christian world.

Our Lord Jesus Christ knew the force of short and powerful phrases. The gospels have recorded many of them. "Take up your cross and follow Me." "If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn him the other also". "Let your right hand not know what your left hand is doing". "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. Such slogans express key concepts of His teaching in a striking manner. We can learn from the world of advertising how valuable such slogans are. We should make a far more repeated and calculated use of them. Perhaps we need not go as far as some Protestant Churches that publicly advertise such slogans along the roads. But it is worthwhile to consider the practice of putting them up along the walls of the corridors in our institutions (with, perhaps, an occasional change to bring variety). In our publications we should make full use of this element in Our Lord's message. When teaching the catechism to children we do well to make them remember the doctrine in the form of such sayings of Christ.

Fifth Rule: The means of Social Communications can make or break an image

Much of what has been said before remains within the sphere of our own narrow surroundings. The modern world of mass media has given a new dimension to the creation of images. The Press, the Radio, Film and Television can change existing images in a very short period. These channels of information are so powerful that all the secular agencies are continously trying to conquer them. Business, as well as politics, pours fabulous sums into calculated programmes for the improvement of the public image. Most daily papers and weeklies do not pay on the subscriptions of the readers. Advertising is their largest source of income. In the United States of America more than three percent of the national income is spent on advertizing alone. It is difficult to estimate the true power of these communication media highly enough. By their hold on the public, they control what people think.

It would go far beyond the scope of this booklet to outline all the consequences inherent in this realization. Let it suffice to stress what has already been put so forcefully in the Vatican Council Declaration on the Means of Communication: that the Church cannot afford to neglect them. We will have to foster our image, both through our own channels and through the secular channels. In some cases we may be rather helpless about what others say or write, but often the contrary is also true. A judicious word spoken at the right time, a well-planned article, a pointed letter to the editor can contribute much to the building up of the correct image.

There is one particular aspect of the matter which should still be given consideration. In the field of mass communications it is not unusual for a particular person or institute to be suddenly placed in the limelight. What may have been purely a local affair, with no more than local implications, may become overnight a question that affects the image of the whole Church. Father Ferrer's case has focussed attention on the whole question of foreign service in development work. The publicity thus given to Catholic involvement in development work has been valuable to the Church. It is always difficult to assess the total value of what publicity has done to an image. We should realise that such flashes of publicity are bound to recur from time to time. Father Benedicts trial is another example. There may be dangers in such wide publicity, but there are also great providential opportunities in it. The persons involved in matters of this kind have a special responsibility that cannot easily be measured in terms of after-effects. In some cases it might even be planned to focus on public attention on such persons, institutions or projects as are likely to enhance the correct image of the Church. The publicity given to the opening of St. John's Medical College in Bangalore in 1967 could set up example for many fruitful undertakings of the same type.

The great temptation in caring for one's image may lie in the direction of hypocrisy. If our image depends on what people *see*, on the association of thought created, on the persons with whom they identify the image, on external names and loans, and on the judgement of modern publicity, it is easy to acquire an attitude of 'image making, that would be contrary to the

Gospel. First and foremost we should see to it that we are such that we can afford to project an image on behalf of the Church. And while paying attention to the aspect of 'image' in what we say and what we do, we should never lose the virtue of frankness and sincerity. Business may deceive people into believing in qualities that do not exist by artificially building up an image. In the service of Christ sincerity itself is an essential quality of the image we want. And the image of sincerity can be built up by sincerity alone.

Chapter Six

ORAL-COMMUNICATION

"An apt utterance is a joy to man;
and a word in season—how good it is!"

Prov. 15/23.

Communication is the basis of all human cooperation. The story of the tower of Babel has expressed this truth in a classical way. Mankind had undertaken a gigantic project, and—the narrative in Genesis 11 leaves no doubt about this—mankind was capable of achieving it. The only way to halt them in their presumptuous plan was to confuse them in their means of communication! The inspired author of Gen. 11/1-9 thereby expressed a very great truth: that one of the fundamental divisions of mankind has come about by the fact that "they no longer understand one another's speech". This division of mankind, seen by the inspired author in relationship to man's pride and general sinfulness, will finally come to an end in heaven. There mankind will meet again as "a great crowd from every nation, tribe, people and language" that will sing the praises of God and the Lamb with one voice (Rev. 7/9-10). In other words, the trouble with us men is that we often do not speak the same language. Our inner divisions and lack of spiritual and intellectual harmony have found expression in the absence or faultiness of communication.

Our age is the age of science and automation. Machines and engines are replacing manpower in every sphere. Computers make our calculations and electric instruments substitute for our senses and our intellectual powers of observation. In this complex of steel, wires and electricity one might imagine that there was now little need any longer for inter-human and personal communication. Nothing would be more natural than for us to conclude that the new era of mass communications has made the exchange of thought between one person and another superfluous. However, and this is a remarkable fact that needs to be stressed, it is precisely in the fields of secular business, secular industry and secular management that the need for oral communication has been rediscovered. It has been established by undeniable scientific investigations and long-term research, such as only the secular branches of man's communal activity can afford to pay for. that there is nothing that can replace such oral, human, inter-personal contact. Big business is spending millions to foster it among its personal with the slogan: "Good communications mean doing good business !" Large industries have erected special training institutes for the purpose of training their managers and key personnel in all the aspects of this skill of communication. From many reports that have been published on the secular aspect of such communication five outstanding guidelines have been selected here because of their obvious application to the apostolate.

First Guideline: Make time to talk with the persons entrusted to your care.

In the chain of communication there are certain people

in key positions that have a special function to fulfil. In our ecclesiastical set-up we may identify these persons as the *immediate superiors.* Under this group many different kinds of superiors have to be included. Immediate superiors are:

—the bishops for their priests;
—the parish priest for his assistants;
—the local religious superior for the other religious;
—the principal of a school or hospital for the staff;
—the rector of a Seminary or training institute for staff and students;
—teachers and professors for their students;
—the parish clergy for their parishioners;
—lay apostolate leaders for the members of their association; etc.

In the various points of advice that will be given in the rest of this chapter we are thinking of these and all other immediate superiors. In one way or other all our Church personnel is involved in and this makes it all the more necessary to study what can be done to improve that most vital aspect of human communication; the personal interview, the private talk.

Business research began with the discovery that many persons in such key positions either did not have the time or did not make time for personal interviews with the people entrusted to them. The Yale's Technological Project established that in many industries the local manager and assistant manager had to decide or take action regarding 583 small or big cases a day. This left 48 seconds for each

case. It should be realised that these cases concerned people who came with a question, a suggestion, a complaint, etc. Far to little time could be given to the personal angle in these matters. In fact, the same research pointed out that the average time given by managers to personal talks did not exceed five minutes a day! Ofcourse, this is fatal for the management in the long run. Small misunderstandings and human resistances will build up in the course of time which will create enormous delays and losses to the industry concerned.

It is obvious that we have a close parallel to this in our overworked pattern of life in the apostolate. The principal of a school may well have to make just as many decisions, big or small, on an average school day as the managers mentioned above. But even if the pressure of the apostolate takes other forms, one thing is certain: the average 'immediate superior' in the apostolate does not give sufficient time for personal talks and interviews with his personnel, as was the case in the world for industry until recent times. We still have to discover the full need and the full implications of this fundamental lack of communications. Some religious institutes, some dioceses and some parishes may be exceptional in having given enough thought to it. In many other cases there is a general feeling among those under authority that there is not sufficient opportunity for a real exchange of opinion with immediate superiors.

It may be argued that personal talks are not required in certain situations, as the normal way of living would provide ample substitutes. In some cases this may be true. A parish priest who lives with one assistant in a rural

parish, may have created such an atmosphere of cooperation and may have introduced such natural means for personal communication (for example, long after-supper discussions) that it would hardly be necessary to introduce anything else. (Always presupposing that the parish priest in question really gives his assistant full opportunity to express himself on all matters that are of concern to him). Such institutions, however, are exceptional. In many more instances people may live in communities, with common meal, with common recreational periods and short walks after dinner, without any realistic possibility for the junior staff member to communicate with his superior. The Superior may have the opinion that such communication is superfluous. He may imagine that he is fully aware of all the talents, the tensions, the interests, the need of support and encouragement, alive in the minds of his community. In very many cases just the opposite will be true. The real problems that confront others, their real difficulties, the precise areas in which they need help, escape the superior.

In business there is what is known as the 'open-door, technique. This means that the superior makes it clear to all those under his care that they can, at all times and for any reason at all, just 'drop in and spill their mind'. Such an 'open-door technique is also in vogue in many of our institutes and organizations. It is interesting to note that the secular branches of management have come to the conclusion that this 'open-door' technique, however good in theory, has in fact proved to be a failure. People in difficulties have rarely made use of this facility. This is partly due to the attitude of the responsible person, who, in spite of his protestations, does not really make himself approa-

chable. It is also to a great extent due to the fact that the superior in question will often be too busy to receive many people, however good his intentions. In other words, business has registered this method as being insufficient and as not adequately coping with the need. What about our own practice in this matter ? Has the 'open-door technique' been successful? Granting the good it has done in some cases, I believe that we are justified in saying that for us too it has failed. How many seminarians with real problems will freely approach the rector or other professors to discuss their difficulties? How many religious who are suffering under misunderstandings and feelings of frustration will have the courage to approach their superiors spontaneously? How many priests will make use of the facilities offered by their bishops for frank and heart-to-heart discussions? How many students in our schools will, on their own account, approach their teachers or professors for guidance in matters that deeply concern them? In all fields, including the parish and the lay apostolate movements, the insufficiency of this method will be recognized. Only a few will make use of the facilities offered through the 'open-door technique . For the large majority of persons the superior cannot leave it to their own initiative to seek contact. Contact must be made from higher up. Contact must be created. Contact must be begun by the superior and guided by the superior.

In many difficulties arising out of strained relations, or personal emotional dispositions of individuals, the only remedy is to talk about it. The enormous value of a confidential interview both for superior and junior cannot be overestimated in such circumstances. Business has deve-

loped one practical rule for dealying with personal misunderstanding. The rule is as effective as it is simple: "Talk with the man!" If we care to dig in our own experience we will all find instances where we had built up inner resistances against a person or against his proposals until we had an opportunity to talk with him. Talks cannot solve all problems. But in matters of human relations they have a function to fulfil that cannot be taken over by anything else. The talk has the advantage that in it we meet the whole person. We have an opportunity of assessing immediately his reactions and his motivation for the reaction. We have the chance of rectifying wrong notions the other may have had regarding us and our ideas. We can do more in half-an-hour's talk than could be done by many days of written communication. In the apostolate we have the other great advantage of dealing mostly with people who are motivated by the same basic ideals that inspire our own action. From the business point of view this puts us from the start in an ideal situation for real inter-human contact. And, let us admit, however much we may grumble about one another at times, it is on the human level of contact with the other man's difficulties and aspirations that we usually experience a mutual sympathy and 'empathy' that is truly Catholic. The slogan "Talk with the man!" should be a guiding principle in any situation that calls for a straightening out of tensions.

The lesson we should learn from secular efficiency in this matter is the need to create opportunities for such personal talks within the structure of our work. We have to find time for it. We have to make the first contacts ourselves, inviting the individuals to come and speak to us,

in the beginning on a merely informal basis. It is not difficult for anyone to find the most natural way of bringing this about. Periodical personal interviews of this type will be welcome to all juniors, if it is made clear that their only purpose is to facilitate human contact on the personal level. It may be wise to fix at least half-an-hour for each such interview. This is the minimum time suggested by communication experts. The attempt to see as many persons as possible within an hour is absolutely destructive of real human communication. With the tight schedule of many of our immediate superiors this will involve a revolution in the relative allotment of time of their activities. The time thus consumed in personal contact with those in their care may seem a loss at first. In the long run it will prove a real gain even in terms of external efficiency. Business has proved this in hard dollars. We will see the results in a more fruitful and effective apostolate.

Second Guideline: Create the atmosphere for personal communication

Personal communication needs a certain atmosphere. We cannot hope to penetrate into a person's real mind, if we do not give him a chance to 'open up'. Each person has a particular way of giving expression to what is in his mind or his emotions, and we have to allow him full freedom to follow his own way in this. It will be impossible to establish real contact, if we have not first created a feeling of mutual confidence and interest. All this seems extremely vague. Many superiors have great good will and would readily agree to the need of creating such an atmosphere, but will object that it is the practical "know-how"

that they would like to acquire. The following paragraphs contain the instructions given to managers in order to create such an atmosphere. One should remember, however, that these instructions should not be followed as magic tricks that will do the job by themselves. Everything depends on the personal disposition of the superior to be really open. With such a disposition, the means indicated below will help to give concrete shape to the general guideline.

A personal interview will be more successful if some attention is given to *the arrangement of the setting*. People feel far more at home if they are allowed to talk from an easy chair, facing a person who is also sitting in a relaxed manner. Writing desks are a barrier to communication, not only in a physical sense. Many parish priests, Bishops and religious superiors have already discovered this from their own experience. In a corner of their office they have arranged some easy chairs, grouped round a small table, with cigarettes and matches lying ready. For talks of longer duration, or of a more intimate nature, they will spontaneously direct the visitor to this corner and make him sit down in an easy chair, offering a smoke or a drink. The psychological effect of this gesture is of great value. It puts the person immediately at ease. It shows him that the superior is really interested in a confidential exchange of thoughts and experiences. In brief, it helps to create an atmosphere of relaxation in which it becomes much easier to release the burden one may have on one's mind. It is worth stressing that such an arrangement is not contrary to the spirit of poverty. Our Lord Himself always made His Apostles feel at ease when they wanted to speak to

Him. He would not have dreamed of addressing them from behind a desk, or making them sit on an iron chair. Mary was surely feeling comfortable and at ease while she listened to Jesus, 'seated at His feet' (Lk 10/39). Juniors should feel the same place and satisfaction when with their superiors.

Psychology tells us that some time is needed *to build up a "contact situation"*. This means that it is most unwise to start business right away, unless previous contacts have been so good that little introduction is necessary. The famous question: "What do you want?", a question that is often pelted at a person before he has had time to feel acclimatized, has the effect of unsettling many people from the start. Ancient Indian traditions of beginning conversation should be studied here. It is no waste of time to break the ice with some chit-chatting about one thing or other. Usually something will have happened in the parish, in class, or in the institute that will provide matter for such an informal beginning. A smile, a kind look, some attention to the humorous side of things, will all be helpful. Every person is different and one should not try to be artificial in adopting ways of acting or speaking foreign to one's own make-up. But each one can, within the frame-work of his own approach, make the other feel welcome and comfortable. A little experience will make us quite expert at this.

When the time has come to discuss personal problems, it may be useful to remember the psychological rule of *speaking about a person's work* before one tackles the person himself. This may seem of minor importance and yet it

can save many a conversation from premature shipwreck. Many people are reticent in matters that concern themselves and they feel more at ease when they are allowed to speak about themselves indirectly. The work one is doing is an excellent testing ground for a man's happiness and difficulties. Ask what he or she is doing. Ask which aspects of the work seem most important, how much time they take, how the person could be helped to do them better. In the course of reporting on the work the man will be speaking about himself, about the hopes he fosters, to set-back the experiences and the difficulties he foresees. Personal problems will soon come to the fore and in this way a natural opening will have been given to bring up such private concerns.

Another quality that should characterize these private interviews is *the tone of respect.* Even though we may be the supreme authority in a school, parish or institute, and the person confronting us may be very much our junior—a student, perhaps, or even a child—a true atmosphere for communication requires a respectful way of speaking. There are no precise rules that can be given about this. The attitude of the superior will be decisive in giving expression to it. From the very beginning the person contacted should be able to see from the way we deal with him that we esteem, respect and appreciate his work. There is nothing that will more quickly embitter and close up another than a haughty approach, a sneer, or any other sign of disrespect. The person entrusted to us may have—and will have—his faults, but this should not make us lose sight of the total good he is doing. And, whatever our judgement about others —regarding which we may well recall the warning

in the Gospel!—, they always have the right to polite and respectful treatment.

Third Guideline: Learn to listen; listen and listen

It almost seems a contradiction, but secular research has proved it: the best communicators are those who have learned to listen. In industry and business those managers and production-leaders are ranked highest by the employees, of whom it can be said: "He is a man we can talk to!" "He is a man who listens!" Among superiors in the Church the same thing can be said. Happy the superiors who have learned how to listen! Fortunately, we have a large number of them and it is a pleasure to hear a priest say: "We have a fine bishop. We can talk to him about anything and he will listen to us." As far as I know formal enquiry has ever been made about this in connection with Church personnel, but it is fairly sure that one of the qualities most appreciated is the ability to listen. What does it mean to listen? Let us hear what the specialists tell us.

There is first of all the need for preparation. We must have made up our minds really to listen, to learn, to find out what the other person wants to say. Far too often our listening can become some more external formality for the sake of giving another person the chance to have his say: Listening means acquiring new knowledge, learning a person better giving up some of our misunderstandings. Listening is more *an attitude of mind* than an activity. Some persons have almost entirely lost this disposition of true learning and listening. If we discover such tendencies

in ourselves we must counteract them by special effort. Some firms run training courses in listening for this purpose.

Attention forms one element in the process of listening. We can already prevent distraction by giving some thought to factors that would decrease our power of concentration The place of the interview should be sufficiently, quiet for both persons to hear one another easily. Background noises should be cut out wherever possible. Both persons should also be able to see one another, for listening involves looking at the one who speaks. It is absolutely fatal to glance at a newspaper or page through a report while the other is speaking. We cannot concentrate on two things at the same time, and he will feel our lack of interest as a serious block of frankness and openness. Equally disastrous is the practice of going through correspondence during the period of interviews. Some superiors perhaps think it will help their juniors to speak if they pretend not to listen by doing one of these things. They should realise that they are achieving just the opposite effect. When we speak we feel encouraged by the full attention given to our words by the part ner in conversation.

Listening is an active job. Three degrees of listening have been distinguished by experts; saying nothing so that the other can speak; showing signs of understanding or approval by nodding the head and putting in an occasional "Ah, yes!"; actively participating in the conversation by *asking for further elucidations.* One simple method is called the 'echo technique'. In order to encourage the other to speak out more fully, one can echo his last words. He

may have said: "My parishioners appreciate the new missal that was introduced." The obvious echo to this might be: "So they appreciate it, do they ?" The person interviewed will then gladly elaborate with examples and clarifications. This is an excellent way of showing active interest and encouraging the speaker.

It sometimes happens that we do not fully understand what the speaker is driving at or why he is saying something. For this *the reflection method* is recommended. The reflection consists in an attempt on the part of the interviewer to repeat what the speaker has said in his own words. The junior may just have said: "I don't know how to manage in class. I always seem to lose control of the situation. The superior should or could intervene at this point with a reflection : "You mean that you find it difficult to keep discipline?" The junior will then have a chance to explain whether he meant it in this way or not. Sometimes the emotions of the speaker can also be isolated and identified in the same manner. A member of a lay movement may say to his parish priest: "I can't understand why the president has not invited Mr. So-and-so!" The parish priest might well reflect on this statement with the question: "I see. You are annoyed at the president for not having invited everyone?" This will naturally lead to the required specifications.

The foundation of good listening is a good power of '*empathy*', of re-living another's impressions, of being able to put oneself into another person's situation. It goes without saying that empathy and listening are also required on the part of the junior. The junior should approach his

superior with an equally open disposition and willingness to understand why the superior sees things as he does. In the concrete human situation, however, the real perils lie on the side of the superior. It is he who is most in danger losing his ability to listen and stands to gain or lose most from not being able to learn from what his juniors have to tell him. Father Th. V. Purcell, SJ, a well-known American sociologist lecturing at the Loyola University, once wrote about industry: "The foreman disposes of many sources of information to get to know the character of the personnel in his section and to evaluate them. Of all these, however, listening to the individual labourer remains the most important one." Listening to the individual labourers in the apostolate will equally remain the best source of information for any superior.

Fourth Guideline: Communicate also scope of motivation

In the early years of the industrial revolution the principle of "No brains in the workshop !" was widely applied. Labourers were put to work on one or other small part of a complicated machine without being told what the part meant for the whole machine. Their particular work was not explained in the context of the whole process of production. They were forced to become real 'cogs in a machine ! The mistake has long since been realised and now there is hardly any firm that does not supply all its employees with current information on all aspects of production, storing and marketing. It has been found that this has greatly improved cooperation and a feeling of satisfaction in work.

In the present set-up of our apostolate the work has to be shared between many individuals. A religious society may have the care of a certain number of schools, hospitals, orphanages and other institutes. The work in the diocese embraces extremly difficult and more amenable parishes. interesting jobs and exasperating jobs. Quite an appreciable percentage of our personnel is constrained to work in less spectacular and more demanding types of the apostolate. This is no more than natural and it is part and parcel of the act of submission by which we voluntarily bind ourselves to serve the apostolate in whatever form obedience may require this from us. But it is very important to remember the other principle that all members of the Mystical Body should act as an organic unit and that this entails a good amount of information. Surely, in the body also the feet are necessary and these feet will only be happy if they realise that it is through them that the body can walk. It is possible to be a monk in the desert and to meet no other human being in a physical manner. It is not possible to cut oneself off psychologically from the rest of mankind. The only healthy anchorite, in the Catholic sense of the word, is the anchorite who lives and suffers *for* the other members of the Mystical Body, even if, for reasons of penance and seclusion, he avoids their physical companionship. In other words, it is essential for each and every one of our Church personnel to know the progress made by the whole Body and to understand how particular task fits in with the work of the whole Church.

Such information has not always been given. Many a person would feel much better and happier in the job, if the superior were to explain the reasons why a certain task

has been entrusted to him and how it fits in with the total apostolate. There should also be a more frequent exchange of contact between persons engaged in various types of apostolate : clergy in the direct ministry and clergy in the field of education, religious in specialized work and those holding administrative positions. It is a great help to know how our own small contribution influences the whole, and how by our unrewarding work we may make others free to harvest rich results. Again the immediate superior is in a key position here. During personal interviews he should seek to supply the junior with such information as will provide a better insight into the total picture and a more profound motivation for his work. In this context it may be useful to revise the practice of giving appointments with a mere stroke of the pen. Some explanation should be given as to the importance of the work entrusted, the objectives envisaged, the reasons why the work should be done in one way and not in another, and the function of this particular work in the total apostolate to be undertaken.

For the same reasons far more publicity should be given to the work done by each member of the community, be it diocesan or religious. Astonishing as it may seem, persons may live with other in the same house for many years without having a clear picture of their work, its importance and its implications. The result is a general lack of co-operation and a failure to perceive the real issues at stake. In some communities of Sisters it has been found helpful to convert the traditional 'chapters of fraternal correction' into common meetings 'to consider one another's difficulties.' In other communities those attending special se-

minars or conferences are asked to give a brief report to the whole community, at times during lunch or supper. Some seminary staffs have found a brief weekly staff meeting on all matters concerning the running of the Seminary and the outside apostolate an indispensable means for real cooperation. In all these endeavours the immediate superior should give guidance and encouragement.

Fifth Guideline: Be firm in dealing with grievances or defects

The real test of good communication lies in our success in smoothing out tensions and improving what needs to be corrected. In every community there are some difficult persons who are a cause of anxiety for their immediate superior. The difficulty may lie in their character, in historical circumstances or in the type of work in which they are involved. It is no good avoiding speaking with such persons simply because they will present difficulties. A superior who feels his responsibility will know what precisely in this case there will a special need for keeping open good lines of communication. Personal resentment, irrational prejudice or fear, should not obstruct the executive of his task of providing real guidance. In some extreme cases where all attempts at better communication have failed, the superior is forced to maintain a policy of 'non-confrontation'. Superiors may not take refuge such a policy, however, until all possible avenues for coming to a better understanding have been tried.

It is an art to be able to pinpoint *the precise source of trouble* when juniors present complaints and grievances. Business management is advised by psychologists to dis-

trust the first impressions created, by such complaints. It may be that the statement made looks outrageous to us. Seen from the point of view of the other, there may be a solid ground for complaining. Frequently the junior cannot or does not want to reveal the deeper cause of anxiety. An assistant may complain about the food in his new parish, saying that it does not agree with him. Further investigation may uncover friction with the parish priest who has prescribed a fixed menu. It would be useless to lecture the assistant on the value of various diets, or to reassure him by sending him to the doctor. The real source of trouble is to be found in his relations with the parish priest and it is there that the solution will lie. A student in the seminary may repeatedly complain about headaches. No doctor's advice has proved of any avail. It may be that prudent investigation will uncover the student's uncertainty about his vocation. He may feel that he has no vocation and yet fear the consequences of leaving the Seminary. The solution will lie in the direction of resolving his doubt, perhaps by helping him overcome his psychological fear of going home. Complaints should, therefore, be taken very seriously by the superior. They should be thoroughly investigated and promptly dealt with. Neglect or delay will only store more serious trouble for the future.

What about a person's *defects*? How should the superior speak about these to those entrusted to him? Let us presume that the superior has taken the pains to find out whether such defects are really there. Let us also presume that they really need to be got rid of because they hamper the work or cause the junior himself some measure of harm. The superior should then quite frankly

and deliberately criticise these defects. It has proved harmful to glide over them, and this not only because of our duty to correct—remember the example of Holi and his sons !—but because of the harm done to efficiency of management and guidance... Both superior and junior will feel relieved if the matter is discussed openly. The superior will have the opportunity to put his criticism in its true perspective, without exaggeration or distortion, and the junior will have his chance to explain himself and accept the correction in a spirit of humility. Many superiors do not have the courage to say what they find lacking in the other person, or they employ the so-called "sandwhich-technique", in which an unpleasant remark has been carefully wrapped in a bundle of appreciation and praise. The sandwhich technique may fail in many ways. The criticism may not be noticed sufficiently by the person concerned, or it may taste somewhat bitter after the words of praise that have been spoken. An intelligent person will recognize the technique used and may resent it as dishonest. Rather than relying on such tricks one should speak out boldly, always within the proper dimensions and in the spirit of fraternal charity. Even if the immediate reaction of the person criticised may not be pleasant, the frankness of the procedure will not fail to produce a lasting impression and will lay the foundation for better personal contact in the future.

Are You Skilled in Communication?

Scale to Judge yourself. Put after each question "Yes", "No", or "At times".

1. Do you have fixed periodical interviews with the people in your case ? .....
2. Do you give ample time to those who come to speak with you? .....
3. Do you spend a few minutes in putting visitors at ease before embarking on business? .....
4. Do you offer them an easy chair? .....
5. Do you normally speak about a person's *work* before discussing the person himself ? .....
6. Do you allow the other person to speak at length ? .....
7. Do you give your full and undivided attention to what the other says ? .....
8. Do you find you learn much from such personal conversations ? .....
9. Do you take the trouble to explain to juniors *why* certain decisions have been taken ? .....
10. Do you have the reputation of taking prompt action on what emerged from these talks ? .....

Give yourself *two marks* for every "Yes", *one mark* for every "At times" and no mark for every "No", and add up the total.

Evaluation : 16—20: excellent
11—15: quite good
below 11: you need improvement !

Chapter Seven

CONSULTATION

"When no counsel is taken, plans miscarry
But when there are many advisers, they succeed"

Prov. 15/22

Business, government administration, military command and industry are all based on the principle of final responsibility on the part of the highest functionaries. The general director, the minister, the commander-in-chief and the top manager remain ultimately responsible for all the decisions taken. Therefore, contrary to what one might think, in spite of the democratic tendencies of to-day, the actual authority remains with the few and with the few at the top. Yet there has been an important shift, not regarding the principle of authority itself, but regarding the manner in which this authority is exercised. In the secular fields especially three aspects of this shift demand our attention;

(*i*) From a procedure of taking decisions based on the opinion of top functionaries alone there is a shift to a procedure of taking decisions based on a wide spectrum of opinion.

(*ii*) From the concept of authority as a personal relationship between superior and subject there is a shift to the concept of authority as leadership in a team.

(*iii*) From a stress on brute power as the foundation of co-operation there is a shift to stress on mutual confidence as the foundation for cooperation and obedience.

It is interesting to note that this threefold shift can also be observed to a great extent in developments in the Church. Perhaps many more qualifications need to be made before we could agree with this threefold shift whole-heartedly. Perhaps it is not expressed in the correct terminology for the particular context of ecclesiastical and religious obedience. But we can learn something from it. The actual authority and responsibility *can* remain with the top-leaders even though in the process of decision-making the opinion and advice of more people is asked for. In fact, the responsible leaders will then feel in a better position to take decisions. Moreover, responsibility in the Church has been seen too much as the burden of individual persons. The aspect of 'team' responsibility, which we find even in the Gospel, had been lost sight of. The modern shift may mean a healthy recovery of this aspect of team responsibility. Superiors can thus be seen as having relationships not only to each individual subject, but first and foremost to the whole team of cooperators. This will also provide a new motivation for obedience. Even classical moral theology stresses that obedience through the motive of fear is much inferior to obedience out of love and confidence. Such a new motivation for obedience (as long as it remains real obedience) is a positive gain that should be striven after. In other words: ecclesiastical and religious superiors need not fear for a lose of real authority in the new trends of today. These trends are not to be understood as demo-

cratic in the sense of a levelling out of authority itself. They should be made use of to (a) involve more people in the process of decision making; (b) give more importance to 'team' responsibility in the apostolate; (c) stress the motive of mutual confidence rather than the application of power.

It is not within the possibilities of this book to exhaust all the aspects involved in 'team dynamics' as applied to the apostolate in various fields. A modification of some of our existing structures might be the consequences of this new trend in pastoral life. There are for example the very successful experiments, made in Malaysia, of parishes entrusted to 'team with a leader' rather than to an (autonomous) parish priest with (totally dependent) assistants. It seems more practical to discuss here the most obvious implication of the shift in decision-making: the need of wider consultation. Such consultation will normally take place by means of meetings, conferences and workshops. I suggest, therefore, that we turn once more to the secular doctrine of efficiency for recommendations on the prerequisites of successful consultation through these means. The recommendations may be formulated as four conditions.

First condition: Be clear on the precise purpose of the meeting

Meetings cannot be a success if the participants are ignorant or doubtful as to their precise role and task. The main condition to ensure success lies therefore in the effective communication of this purpose to all concerned. Before this the chairman himself should be absolutely clear about the purpose. Otherwise the proceedings of the meeting

will constantly be held up by the wrong type of intervention. The participants will disagree with the chairman on matters to procedure. Everyone will be dissatisfied with the results of the meeting, as consciously or unconsciously something else had been visualised. What types of meeting then should be carefully distinguished ?

First of all, there is the *self-discovery* or *study meeting*. The purpose of this meeting is the mutual exchange of thought for the simple reason of growing in knowledge, experience, spirituality or judgement. The Gospel enquiry of the specialized lay apostolate movements belong to this category. In some congregations there is the practice of studying together some part of the Council Decrees or some spiritual book. The Legion of Mary has in some areas introduced a similar study on catholic doctrine during their meetings. Then there are the meetings of professors engaged in the same type of teaching of research workers dealing with various aspects of applied science. All these meetings have as their main purpose the stimulation of the individual by witnessing and participating in the intellectual emotional and spiritual life of other members of the group. Such meetings should not be conceived of as having to lead to definite conclusions. Their chief purpose is educative. The main tool at hand is the free exchange of opinion and this should at all costs be encouraged. Meetings of this kind need not have a very fixed schedule and may be allowed to drift into side-issues, as long as the general aim of self-discovery and study achieved.

More directly involved in 'team responsibility' and consultation is the so-called *informative meeting*. The purpose of this meeting is to provide a platform for the superior to

expose decisions taken and to clarify all elements of the proposed policies. It should be noted that the decision has already been taken. For whatever reason, the matter is closed. Yet there remains the need of involving the team, of explaining to them why the decision has taken this form and of clarifying any details in its execution that may have remained obscure. In this type of meeting the only contribution asked for from the participants is attention and willingness. This must be made clear, from the way in which the matter is introduced otherwise the meeting might lead to friction and frustration. Such meetings could be envisaged between a bishop and his clergy, a superior and a religious community, a parish priest and his assistants, as seminary rector and his staff. The necessity of such informative meetings is often overlooked. One should consider, however, that the 'team' of cooperators will need more than a mere notification of a new regulation. They will need to be involved emotionally by seeing the whole perspective of the decision and opportunities should be given to forestall any misgivings that might arise from a lack of personal presentation by the superior.

Consultation in the real sense of the word will take place in the *problem solving meeting.* The objective of this kind of meeting is to get suggestions for the solution of a given problem. The participants are requested to give their recommendations or their judgements on proposed alternatives. In this kind of meeting it must be made clear from the start that such open contributions are sought and it should also be indicated in what manner the competent authority will make use of them. The superior, for instance, may say from the outset: "I will have to take my own

decision about this matter. Anyway I would like to have your frank opinions. Please don't feel shy to speak your mind on this issue. But, remember, the responsibility of taking the decision will be mine, after hearing your opinion and also taking other points into consideration." He could also say: "Having studied all the aspects of this question I find it difficult to make up my mind. I have decided to follow your advice in this matter. So, please, let me know what you think I should do." In both cases the participants will know where they stand and there will be no confusion on the purpose of the advice sought. This approach will be far more rewarding than the so-called *pseudo-democratic meeting* in which the superior comes to the meeting with his mind already made up regarding a decision, but proposed the matter for free discussion to give the decision a semblance of democratic support. When there is opposition in the meeting the superior will have to do some manoeuvring to have his own view accepted by the assembly and this will not pass unnoticed.

Second Condition: Appoint a good chairman.

Not everyone can chair a meeting well. Some people have the right dispositions almost by nature. Others have to learn painfully through much experience. Unfortunately, far too little attention is given to the need of having a good chairman for the success of discussions. Rather than risk an enormous waste of time one should always try to arrange for the best man to chair the meeting. Efficiency demands this. Secular business has learned that it is very profitable to all managers to follow courses on chairmanship and Committee procedure. Our seminaries and training

institutes should give far more attention to training our priests and sisters in a similar way.

The chairman should realise that he has a different function in each of the three types of meetings outlined above. In the study meeting his duty is confined to giving opportunities for individuals to speak, summarizing general findings and encouraging the flow of thought. He is, as it were, merely the policeman directing the traffic of thought in an orderly manner. He need not worry too much about deviations. He need not aim at specific conclusions. In the informative meeting his position is quite different. He now has a very definite task: to make the participants both understand and emotionally accept whatever policy has been decided on. He is either the superior himself or represents the superior. It will be his duty to expose the decision with its background and details. All questions will be put to him and it will be up to him to give an appropriate answer. In the problem-solving meeting his task is again different. He has to attain a denfinite goal, but this goal cannot be obtained without the creative contribution of all participants. He will have both to steer the direction of the discussion and yet leave scope for a complete freedom of expression.

It is in the problem-solving meeting that the chairman has to be in top form. The contribution that can be expected from the participants will be of two distinct kinds: they will express new ideas and they will express their judgement on various solutions. The chairman will have to see to it that the expression of new ideas is not stopped or hampered by premature judgements on the part of other

participants. To achieve this end more effectively, meetings are sometimes made into "*brain-storming sessions*" in which everyone is allowed to give free scope to his imagination. During the brain-storm criticism on other suggestions is forbidden. Any new idea, any fresh approach, however absurd at first sight, may be brought to the fore. When enough new ideas have been gathered the meeting may be converted into a *judging session* to collect the considered opinion of all participants on each and every one of the proposals. The "brain-storming session" should be marked by a very free procedure. The judging session, on the other hand, should proceed step by step, finishing the discussion on one alternative before another is taken up.

It is up to the chairman to involve everyone in the discussion. This will require a good deal of leadership. Loquacious and repetitive speakers will have to be firmly held in hand. Others will need explicit invitations before they will express themselves. Some authors recommend that the element of competition be made use of to liven up the discussion. If one sister has suggested that we should show more apostolic poverty in the type-writers used in the office, and another has said that much time is wasted by inefficiency, mother superior might attract general attention to this contradiction, forcing both sides to specify more in detail what is meant by apostolic poverty and efficiency. The chairman should also be skilled in summing up the opinions expressed before a new point is taken up. If contrary opinions have been expressed it is always necessary to mention both and to verify how many participants would adhere to either side. Omitting the summary at the end of each topic will necessarily lead to dissatisfaction on

the part of the participants who expect something definite as the result of the discussion. The least result that can be obtained is a precise picture of the opinions, offered.

Third Condition: Reduce the restrictions arising from the factor of power to an absolute minimum

Employees depend on their immediate superior for promotion. Business management has discovered that this constitutes a severely limiting factor in the process of consultation. The factor of power looms large in the minds of all participants in the meeting. Often the manager or executive who calls the meeting together may not advert to this element. He may take it for granted that everyone will feel free to speak as he thinks best. In actual fact, however, employees will never forget that it is their employer and bread-giver who is asking the questions. If they fear or suspect that a certain opinion will displease him, they will carefully refrain from expressing it. The least frown on the face of the manager, an impatient gesture, a sharp remark, however insignificant in itself, will take on greater proportions in the mind of the employees. They will interpret it as a sign of warning, as an indication that the danger-point has been reached and that it is better to play safe.

Consultation in the Church has to take place in a situation that is very much parallel. In the Church too the factor of power is acutely felt, at least by those under authority. The students in a seminary or educational institution, the religious of a community, the clergy in the diocese, will remain aware of the fact that their future fortunes depend to some extent on the good relationship they have with their

superiors. By itself there is nothing wrong in this situation. It is normal and it cannot be avoided. But for the sake of consultation it is a factor that has to be taken into consideration. The question for the superior is: "Will my people really express their opinion to me? Will they really give their best advice? Or will they feel shy to speak openly about it in my presence ?" It is interesting to note some of the solutions worked out by secular managements.

Scientific experiments have proved that the best results are obtained by a combination of

(a) the greatest possible freedom of expression;
(b) very clear definitions of imposed restrictions.

It was found that uncertainty constitutes the greatest obstacle to free expression. Few people are willing to commit themselves to opinions if they have not been told to what extent their freedom will be appreciated. Take the example of a seminary staff that wants the opinions of the seminarians on a reform of the existing morning prayers. The seminarians could be divided up into groups and asked to express their opinions in the presence of one member of the staff. Naturally there will be doubt in the minds of the seminarians on the effect which their suggestions might have. What type of recommendation is wanted: What type of recommendation might upset the professor who is present? This uncertainty will greatly diminish their contributions. The best results will be obtained if it is clearly stated : "1. We should have morning prayers in the Seminary. 2. It is the opinion of the staff that it should be done in common (restriction). 3. Apart from these two points, which it would be difficult for us to change, any suggestion on the

form, contents, duration of morning prayers is welcome." With such a clear definition of the freedom of speech expected and the imposed restrictions a fruitful discussion is sure to come about.

The superior should be aware of the factor of power in the course of the discussion. However, much he would like to do so, he will not be considered an ordinary partner in the discussion. His word will sound very decisive. His argument may stop counter-arguments by the mere fact of his position. Secular efficiency suggests, therefore, that the superior refrain from expressing his views until enough scope has been given for a general free expression. Some authors advocate that the person in authority should not chair the meeting himself and should not speak at all in the beginning. In certain circumstances this may be advisable. On the other hand, the team will feel happier if they see that the real leader is himself taking an active part in the discussion. Much depends on the disposition of the superior himself: whether he takes care not to restrict the liberty of expression and whether he shows real anxiety to have the opinions of others, even though they may appear contrary to his own. The participants of the meetings will soon sense the real attitude of the superior and they will surely give him their confidence if they see that he is honestly seeking their cooperation and advice. The power factor will in the last analysis have to be overcome by confidence—the real Christian solution of resolving fear into love.

Fourth Condition: Build up a real team spirit

Consultation through meetings will produce results if the participants in the meeting are willing to contribute to

the common good. They will have to understand and value the process of 'team work'. Most people have to undergo some change before they reach the stage of truly appreciating this new form of cooperation. Most people go to a meeting with their individualistic priorities and purposes in mind, determined to get out of it what suits their own ends. Research has analysed a great number of problem-solving meetings at a high administrative level and has shown that the contributions of many participants were not determined by the need of the problem in hand, but by personal needs, such as:

—dependence of other persons;
—the need for status in the eyes of other people;
—the wish to come to the fore;
—an aggressive disposition;
—the need to air one's feelings;
—disappointments about personal matters.

The amount of valuable time and energy lost by this lack of team spirit cannot be over-estimated. Obviously there is a need of training people to come to a better understanding of the real purpose of common deliberations and of the need to subordinate their own individual problems to the common problem under discussion.

The only way of arriving at a better team spirit is through guidance and explanation. A good leader will soon discover the individualistic elements in the team and he will prudently draw the attention of the persons concerned to this shortcoming. Secular business has illustrated that it

pays to analyse an imaginary sample discussion with the participants of a regular consultation, to show them how unwanted motivations may divert the group from real integration. Real successful team-work cannot come about through one discussion, anyhow, We will have to allow people to learn to appreciate it by feeling its benefits. There is nothing that attracts so much as a truly well-ingrated team. The inner discipline in the team will itself provide a code of action that will exclude too outspoken individualistic tendencies.

To promote team spirit it is worthwhile to encourage opportunities for informal contacts between the meetings and to encourage every activity that can be seen as a result of the cooperation of the whole team. The superior of an educational institute may find it difficult to make his staff act as a team. Suppose that, in a common discussion, a new policy has been worked out regarding domestic servants. It may be that this point was raised by a few members of the staff only, but through general discussion it has eventually become a decision of the whole staff. The superior must then see to it that the whole staff executes the decision in 'team spirit'. He may ask the members, for instance, not to publicise to outsiders who was in favour of the new policy and who was against it. The staff should consider it its *team* decision. It will be noted that such an attitude towards staff decisions will soon strengthen the team spirit among the members. At the next meeting they will be more involved and more anxious to come to a common understanding on other issues.

Chapter Eight

HIGHER MANAGEMENT

"For want of guidance a people will fall but safety lies in a wealth of counsellors."

Prov. 11/14

Our Lord Jesus Christ entrusted to His apostles power and authority over the whole Church. This authority, embodied in the jurisdiction of the Holy Father, of the whole episcopate and of each single bishop, has its source in the express will of Christ, and its essential nature cannot be changed in the course of time. The external way in which the authority is exercised is, however, subject to modifications and change. The history of the Church illustrates this beyond doubt. Consider, for instance, the concept of a diocese in the various periods of Christianity. In early times the diocese had more or less the size of our modern parish. Later on dioceses were planned on a far wider basis. Most dioceses are geographical by determined, but as is well known, there are also dioceses that cover a cross-section of the population, such as those for Christians of the Oriental rites in America. The organization of the Church such as it exists at present, with all the Vatican Congregations, has come about by many successive changes and improvements. We may therefore say that although

the authority remains unaltered, the management of the Church is subject to change.

The Second Vatican Council has sanctioned one such change of management by adopting the principle of the national bishops' conference. It is good to recall the words of the Council in which the reason for this principle is given:

> "From the very first centuries of the Church the bishops who were placed over individual churches were deeply influenced by the fellowship of fraternal charity and zeal for *the universal mission* entrusted to the apostles. And so they *pooled their resources* and *unified their plans* for the common good and for that of the individual churches."
> Decree "Christus Dominus", no 36 (the italics are mine).

The Decree speaks of the universal mission (as common goal), the pooling of resources and the unification of plans. Cooperation under these aspects amounts to what the secular sciences call "Higher Management". For higher management is a system or structure to unite separate substructures for the achievement of a common objective, by a sharing of resources and common action programmes. It is interesting to note that in India the Catholic Bishops' Conference had already been established long before the Council. It was the practical need, experienced by the bishops on the spot, that gave rise to its establishment and growth. Two lines, the practical one of the apostolate and the theoretical one of the Council, coverage in the existing C.B.C.I. The new approach to higher management through the bishops' conference has thus found both its practical and its theoretical justification.

It is not my purpose to elaborate any further the theological principles of ecclesiology that have a bearing on this question. Neither do I consider myself competent to judge the shift in Church law that is implied. Still less will it be my purpose to discuss the actual organization of the C.B.C.I. and its functioning, all of which falls beyond the scope of contribution which secular management could give to an efficient 'higher management' of the Church in any nation or country. These findings of secular management, are, after all, valuable material for comparison that may help to clarify our own ideas. In many instances it will be found that the principles of 'higher management' advocated in the secular field have already successfully been applied in the over-all apostolate in India. It will be seen that the C.B.C.I. (as envisaged by the Council) goes a long way to materialize such 'higher management for the Church' in India. Anyway, I will limit myself strictly to the contribution made by the studies on secular management, pointing out general applications to the apostolate. The matter may be divided under three heads, concerning the need for higher management, the apparent loss of authority and the areas to which higher management should be extended.

First Thesis: Higher Management is required where complicated units have purpose, resources, specializationand results in common

This thesis may look forbidding, but its meaning is quite simple. Take a large company, such as Fords, with a turnover of crores of rupees a year. The company will have many complicated units, such as the supply sector, the production sector, the marketing sector, and so on. These

units have a common purpose: the production and sale of cars. All the units draw from a common source of capital and personnel. Each unit has its own specialists, but the requirements of one specialization may influence other units. Marketing specialists may find that red cars sell best. This information will influence the production. Finally, if anything goes wrong with one of the units, all suffer. The decline or increase in sale of cars affects all the units. In such a situation only an over-all and higher management can guarantee success. This higher management may not be competent to decide about issues belonging to the various sectors. But it has the function of coordinating and planning the general activities of all the units. Only the production sector knows all he intricacies of planning the dash-board. In the production sector again there will be engineers who have specialized on one part of the dash-board, the speedometer. Usually decisions of regarding the speedometer will remain within the domain of the competent engineer. However, when the decision affects other units (does the speedometer attract more buyers?) or the total (the speedometer cannot be produced quickly enough) then the process of higher management will come into operation.

For the Church in India it is good to realise that it has *a common purpose*. There is a theological basis for this in the university of the mission entrusted to the colllege of bishops 'in toto' and in the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. But for our limited scope it may be more useful to point out the implications, this has for the practical order. Our purpose is not merely to bring Christ to one particular town, district or state. Our purpose is to bring

Christ to India. India is more than a conglomeration of geographically distinct states. India has become and is becoming more and more a unity, both from the cultural, a commercial, an administrative and an emotional point of view. There are regionalistic tendencies, but these cannot obliterate the real unity that has been achieved and that will steadily grow. Well, who is christianizing *India*? Each diocese is christianizing one geographical section. Each religious order is sanctifying one sphere of life. Each lay apostolate movement is consecrating one section of Indian temporalities. But who is christianizing *India as such*? It is clear that just as the object of our separate endeavours forms one great unit, so also our approach to that object should be unified. In fact, every diocese, every religious society, every lay apostolate movement is working at the christianization of the whole of India. This common purpose requires higher management of all the units to come to a really common action.

The same can be illustrated from the point of view of *the resources*. The financial resources at the disposal of all dioceses, religious institutes, and other agencies, derive mainly from a few common sources: (a) local resources; (b) the Propagation of the Faith; (c) donor agencies. Whether one likes to admit it or not, the flow of finances into one project will diminish the flow into another. The financial balance of all the units is subject to financial changes in any one unit. In the hyopthetical case of an abundance of finance, so that wastage would not matter, the other units might be less affected. In the present situation, however, there is financial deficiency in most sectors of the apostolate, and the Church cannot afford to allow

wastage, or over-emphasis on one type of apostolate at the expense of another. With regard to *personnel* we find a similar picture. In actual fact the personnel in India is available only from a few common sources: (a) foreign personnel, a source rapidly diminishing; (b) local vocations; (c) areas with flourishing Christian communities, such as Kerala, Mangalore and Goa. The sources of personnel again will mutually influence one another and the flow of personnel into one ecclesiastical unit will diminish the flow into another. In other words: all units depend on one another in their policy of the use of personnel. Considering the scarcity of Church personnel for the apostolate in many areas, there can be great losses if no over-all planning of personnel supplies is worked out. Like big business, the complicated structure of the Church in India will need higher management of account of its dependence on common resources.

Again, there is the consideration of *specialization.* Different units, such as dioceses, religious orders and lay apostolate movements, exercise the apostolate in specialized fields. The specialization of one unit will make demands on the activity of another unit. A certain religious order may provide facilities for the training of nurses. Applicants for this training will have to be drawn from the dioceses. The qualifications required for good Catholic nurses will be imposed by the hospitals, managed, to a great extent, by other religious bodies. The specialization of the training of nurses cuts through all layers of the Church and somehow touches all. The training of priests and religious affects the whole Church even more intimately. The liturgical training given to seminarians, for instance, is a

specialization that will have consequences for every single unit of Church organization. What about marriage counselling ? The Catholic Press ? Dialogue with Hinduism and Islam ? The principles and practice of Ecumenism ? However much these specializations may find their foothold in an existing local unit, they involve the whole Church as such, and higher management will therefore be required to make them serve the common good as well as smaller objectives.

The need of higher management is also evident from the unavoidable *sharing of results*. Various units in a business company will have to cooperate because failure of one unit affects all the others. This is very much the case in present-day India. It is not realistic to close one's eyes to the consequences for the whole resulting from the failure of one unit. The unwise statements and action of one missionary might result in a total expulsion of foreign mission personnel, at least from one area. The person in question need not even be a Catholic, and yet the whole Church will be seriously involved. Over-hasty decisions in one sector of the apostolate may endanger the effectiveness of another sector. Frictions between diocesan and religious clergy in one region may have repercussions all over the country. Of course, it serves no purpose to exaggerate this. Local set-backs are often gallantly borne and solved by the local Church. Yet very often the implications and consequences will reach far beyond the boundaries of the local unit, requiring the exercise of 'higher management' to safeguard the good of the whole Church.

The principles for which higher management is required

in secular business and administration apply also to the apostolate of the Church in India. The beginnings made by the C.B.C.I. to bring about such a higher management should be considered of the greatest importance for the future of the Church. Perhaps, it might be advisable to publicise more the aspects of common purposes, common resources, common specialization and common results which were analysed above. This will awaken the interest and understanding of our clergy, religious and lay men regarding the need for a national approach in the apostolate. Without a thorough commitment to this by all concerned it will be difficult to be really effective.

Second Thesis: Higher management does not entail losses for the substructures.

In business and secular administration higher management often has to overcome resistance on the part of management at a lower level. Suppose that we are studying a complex of industries, involving petrol, tar, chemical products and soap. Each of these industries may function as a separate unit, but since the products are closely allied and since the capital is unified, they are brought under 'higher management' The managers of the various industries may feel apprehensive of the outcome of this 'higher management'. Each one could argue as follows : "From now on decisions will be taken by a higher body. I will lose a sizable part of my authority and independence. Who can say whether the more unified programme will not function at the expense of my unit ?" Such fear and anxiety is common and rests on deeply human and understandable motivations.

It is not more speculation to say that similar reactions may be expected to the introduction of 'higher management' in the field of the Church's apostolate. Persons responsible for a diocese, for a religious society, for an institution or for a particular apostolic project will naturally feel apprehensive about' interference from outside'. A system of effective higher management might be considered a dangerous centralization of power, an intrusion on one's own field of responsibility and a possible cause of loss of resources and personal for one's own particular work. The reaction registered in secular business and administration may therefore be truly considered as a parallel to similar reactions that may reasonably be expected within the Church. Higher management will have to reply to these objections in a very convincing manner to gain the full and considered support of the responsible persons. It is on the particular point that secular research and experience can be of real assistance to us by helping us clarify certain concepts and making us see what higher management really means. For secular management experience teaches us that higher management does not entail loss for the substructures. Let us hear what it has to say and apply it to the situation of the Church.

Suppose that tobacco has been paying well during the last year. A certain farmer may decide to plant five instead of two acres of tobacco for the next year. At the present rate of Rs. 2000 per acre crop this would hold the promise of Rs. 10.000 at the end of next year. In the whole State, let us assume, there are two million farmers with land that is suitable for growing tobacco. If all these two million farmers would decide to do what our exemplary

farmer has decided to do namely plant three more acres of tobacco next year, then the supply of tobacco would rise so much that the price would come down to Rs. 500 per acre crop. This brings us to the economic dilemma. The individual farmer earn Rs. 4000 with his two acres of tobacco. He hopes to earn Rs. 10,000 by growing five acres, but if everybody does this, he will only earn Rs. 3500, that is : Rs. 1500 less than before! If he does not increase his acreage of tobacco while everybody else is doing so, he will only receive Rs. 1000 and be really the worse for it!" "what to do?" It is clear that the farmer might want to risk it and try to make Rs. 10.000 before the other farmers have discovered that it pays to grow tobacco. This we might characterize as the "Save yourself and risk it" approach. Some may benefit from it, but the majority will suffer. A far better approach is the solution of 'higher management' in which farmers' unions, in cooperation with the government and with industry, will calculate the maximum average of tobacco to be grown by each farmer to make all benefit most. In the way all farmer will have a guaranteed income of Rs. 2000 per acre and gain much by it, even though the 'higher management' will have to impose restrictions on the acreage that may be grown.

It is important to understand this last paradox. Higher agricultural management *seems* to impose a restriction on the farmer by forbidding him to grow more than two acres. Yet in actual fact it *guarantees* him his Rs. 4000 gain, whereas the uncontrolled increase of cultivation would bring his income down to Rs. 2500. When higher management is applied to the distribution of personnel and resources in the apostolate, a similar process will take place.

Instead of every territory and institution fighting for itself and trying to secure as large a share as possible of the available resources, a more planned approach will seek to fulfil the needs of all within the total framework. Like the farmers cited above, individual superiors might feel tempted to follow the "save yourself and risk it" method, hoping to acquire some extra funds or personnel for their own project. But the same law of common resources that hit the farmers will also hit the superiors. Some indeed may enjoy extra benefits. The majority will suffer. The restrictions that higher planning might seem to impose will instead guarantee a more sure basis of support.

It might be objected that such a better division of personnel and resources, to take one example, is not acceptable as it would fall outside the decision of the individual superiors involved. Presuming that it be resolved that Madya Pradesh needs more personnel and that this personnel should preferably be recruited from Kerala, Goa and Mangalore, how would this affect the bishops in those regions, or the superiors of religious orders that draw their personnel from them? Would it not come as a most unwelcome, centralized demand from above, perhaps not in harmnoy with the wishes and aspirations of the ecclesiastical units involved? I realise that this is and will remain a most complicated question that would need to be studied further. However, in line with the scope of this book, I would like to point out that secular managements have provided a reply to this objection that has proved its worth in practice. When we speak about centralization or about higher management we tend unconsciously to equate the exercise of authority through these

means as authoritarin and irrational. We are inclined to separate the decision-making body 'on top' from the substructures. But this is precisely not the purpose or procedure of higher management. The decisions made in the 'higher management' approach are made conjointly by all those responsible for the substructures. The superior of the individual unit is thereby lifted out of decision making in his own sphere alone to the making of decisions on a higher level. There is no loss of authority or responsibility in this. Rather there is a new horizon to the responsibility in the sharing of a wider responsibility with others. Secular managements have found this demanded a new concept of responsibility, but one that merited rich compensations. The managers of the soap-factory, the tar-factory, the chemical-plant and the petrol-refinery, when combined in a board of higher management, did not lose their authority over their own sectors, but were together able to formulate policies that furthered the good of the whole complex and of the sector that needed it most. If any of the managers had to make concessions for the good of the whole or for the good of another sector, it was done with his own complete involvement A similar widening of the horizon of decision making could be visualized for the Church. Without anyone losing his autonomy over his diocese, religious order or institute in matters that belong strictly to areas of separate iurisdiction, the decision-making in other fields could be lifted to a higher plane in shared responsibility.

Third Thesis: Higher management includes planning, organisation, control and communication.

Under planning one could group 'problem solving',

'strategy' and 'operational research' such as have been discussed in Former chapters. Planning means : determining a course of action for the future. Planning involves a choice between alternatives. It includes the setting of targets and the outlining of the principal means to obtain them. Planning is the first task of higher management in the secular fields and it is easy to understand why. The substructures are too small to be able to survey the whole field. They need the information and experience of other sector to arrive at a complete picture. A higher management of the apostolate should similarly be seen first of all in the line of planning—planning on a national scale' according to information received by means of scientific research, and in harmony with the general and particular needs of all communities. Such planning of: better dialogue, a more adapted liturgy, an increase in local vocations, a renewal of religious orders, and similar long-term objectives will be of great value to the whole Church and to each diocese, religious society or institute.

Organization is another task of higher management. This comes in practice to the working out of commonly-accepted guidelines according to which certain common projects could be put into execution. It might be desirable, for instance, that a teaching staff of foreign seminary professors be replaced within a year by Indian personnel in order to avoid unwanted political opposition that is foreseen as likely. By higher management a programme of relieving professors from other Seminaries might be set in operation. This would involve an over-all organization of mutual exchanges of personnel until the most essential posts have been filled. Decisions of more lasting effect to regulate

common procedures would also fall under this organization of higher management. The Council Decree "Christus Dominus" clearly envisages such decisions to be taken by the Bishops' Conference, and it declares them binding on all if certain conditions have been fulfilled (no. 38, 4).

Higher management includes *control.* The control meant envisages structures through which it can be ascertained whether the desired objectives have been reached. An electrical company, for instance, may have decided to adopt one general standard for all its articles. The higher management will exercise control by appointing a team to check the standard of the articles produced on and remedy deviations, Control can be various types : control on quality, control on supplies, control on expenses. Each of these types of control finds its application in the apostolate. The Church has always maintained a strict control on various aspects of quality. Religious books may not be printed without an imprimatur. The standard of seminary teaching has been zealously guarded. Degrees in the acclesiastical sciences are obtained only in accordance with rigid rules of requirements and procedure. The freedom of religious has been safeguarded by wise prescriptions. Control on quality has proved beneficial to the Church in all these fields. Control on surpluses would concern itself with the desired targets in recruitment and training. Control on expenses would, in the apostolate, involve a check on the proper use of money: whether grants received were employed for the purpose for which they were given. Donor agencies are actually exercising this kind of control within the limited sphere of their action programmes.

Last, but not least, higher management will involve *communications*. All substructures need to be kept informed about the plans, decisions and programmes of the higher management. Channels will have to be kept open for information and suggestions to flow from below to the top levels. Issues of general interest will have to be given due consideration in publications and meetings. Opportunities will have to be created for all those responsible for the same task or specialised in the same branch of the apostolate to exchange opinions. The improvement of general communication of this kind is an absolute pre-requisite for cooperation. The initiatives already undertaken by the C.B.C.I. have done much good in this line. It is not necessary then to elaborate more on this point.

Chapter Nine

SPIRITUAL EFFICIENCY

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, says the Lord."

Isaiah 55/9

In the foregoing chapters we have allowed ourselves to be instructed on efficiency by the secular branches of science. Time and again we have had occasion to warn ourselves that these principles of secular efficiency do not always apply to the same extent in the field of the apostolate. Business itself will agree with us on this point. What may be efficient in one area may be most inefficient in another. When wrapping bundles of newspaper in preparation for their despatch, it pays to employ a 'wrapping machine'. But it has proved far more efficient to wrap expensive Dutch cigars by hand. Large-size super-market flourish if they are catering for the masses; small family shops have to live on dedicated service to a chosen few. The manufacturing of surgical instruments requires a very elaborate system of controlling the exact alloy of the steel and its conformity to accurate measures. The same system of controlling is out of place in the production of agricultural tools, or, let us say, steamrollers. In other words: efficiency itself demand a new approach in every new

context. Every human activity will have some characteristic principles of its own efficiency.

What then is the specific element of efficiency in the apostolate ? What is there in this efficiency that the secular branches cannot teach us? What is so exclusive to this efficient that we can truly call it characteristic of the apostolate ? It is quite certain that there is something of that nature, something we might call "spiritual efficiency". It is also quite certain that it is a kind of *efficiency*. For it should not escape our attention that Our Lord Himself often refers to images of 'efficiency' in many of His parables. He tells us that it is more efficiency to lay up treasures in heaven than on earth. For on earth our wealth is constantly in danger of being eaten by insects or stolen by thieves. Our account in heaven prove a far safer deposit (Mt. 6: 19-21). He gives us the example of the unjust steward who was 'efficient' in planning for his uncertain future. So should we make use of the riches of this world to make ourselves friends in heaven (Lk. 16/1-9). Jesus points to the 'inefficiency' of worldly ambitions when He says : "What good will it do a man if he gains the whole world at the cost of his life ?" (Mt. 16/26). Was Our Lord referring to Alexander the Great, who conquered the whole world, but was buried with his empty hands hanging outside his coffin? Perhaps. In any case it is clear that the conquerors of the world are in danger of 'losing their life and with it all the earthly gains they may have made. Perhaps the most outspoken Gospel passages on efficiency are the parables of the man who is building a tower (Lk. 14/28-30) and the king marching to battle (Lk. 14/31-33). In both cases Jesus argues from a comparison of secular

efficiency: calculating the expenses in building a tower before one begins, judging one's own military chances before the battle. The implication is that in the spiritual life we should be just as efficient: in this case by realizing the need of total renunciation.

First norm: We cannot succeed without evangelical poverty

Having given the examples of the builder of the tower and the king, Jesus concludes by saying :

> "In the same way, no one of you who does not say goodbye to all that he has can be a disciple of mine !"
> Lk. 14/33.

Jesus claims that efficiency in the apostolate will require detachment and renunciation from our possessions. This goes in direct contradiction to what the secular branches of efficiency seem to advocate. These secular branches are much concerned with building up ample resources. Capital is a corner-stone to business and industry. Jesus, however, points cut that the same is not true for the apostolate.

When instructing His disciples on how they should equip themselves, He does not stress the need of good transport, of adequate clothing, of ample provisions and of reserve funds. He rather emphasizes detachment in the equipment used: "Do nct take gold or silver or copper money in your purses!

Do not take a bag (with provisions) for your journey!

Do not have two shirts, nor shoes, nor a staff....."

(Mt. 10/9-10).

In their stark simplicity these words should make us reflect. Did Our Lord really visualize His priest, His religious sister living a life of such utter poverty ? Who can travel in India today without at least a few rupees reserve money? Who could live without some minimum in clothes and furniture and living space? Who could work efficiently in the apostolate without reliable equipment ? What then does Our Lord mean? We will have to determine how we, in this century, can live the full value of His words without in any way diminishing their strength.

Let us begin to note that Our Lord is not concerned with precise details. In the text quoted above He forbids the taking of a staff and of shoes, but in another passage we read :

"He forbade them to take anything for the journey *except a staff*—no bread, no bag, no small change even their girdles ; they could wear *sandals*, but no two shirts."
(Mk. 6/8-9).

It is not the accidentals that matter, but the spirit expressed by them. The wearing of sandals or not, the taking of a staff or not, will depend on the circumstances. What counts is the inner detachment, a detachment that will show itself in simplicity of life and in a minimum use of the required equipment. Our Lord is not against the means that make the apostolate more effective. He Himself had entrusted the financial organization of His journeys to Judas and He allowed a dedicated group of women to look after the needs of his small group (Lk 8/1-3). The Apostles never hesitated to make use of the available means of transport in their times and of the existing means of communication

(such as interpreters, letters and envoys). We may, therefore, safely conclude that whatever really helps the apostolate, will not be against the spirit of evangelical poverty.

On the other hand, Our Lord's words *do* contain a solemn warning that should not be overlooked. First of all, we should not imagine that our strength ultimately lie in our financial resources or our material equipment. Our Lord expressly forbids us to make our apostolate rest on such externals. That is why He speaks of going on a journey without the required provisions. That is why He wants the Apostle to trust in God's Providence for his sustenance wherever possible. Secondly, as our Lord has frequently stressed in other contexts; the thing that defiles man is not what comes to him from outside, but what leaves his heart. The thing that makes us poor in the sense of the Gospel is, more than anything else, the inner detachment from possessions, from equipment and from external comforts. Finally, our evangelical poverty will not be genuine if it is not visible in one form or other. Poverty means "lacking something we might well have used" and our poverty will thus be real only if we do to some extent lack the things that we would normally wish to enjoy. There is no substitute for this. Even inner detachment remain a mere whim of the imagination if it is not substantiated by some external expression.

In all our planning and organizing we should then adhere to Our Lord's precept of apostolic poverty by always asking ourselves if we are truly detached from our material instruments and if we have given sufficient expression

to this in our actions and deeds. The spirit of detachment from earthly advantages and from earthly comforts should pervade our apostolate. We should feel carried by it in our own lives and all those who come in contact with us should feel its contagious attraction. Christ's message liberates man from the superficial allurements of created things and our apostolic poverty should be a living manifestation of this liberty of spirit. Woe to us if our buildings, our organizations, our material equipment were to witness to a lack of this spirit ! Surely we would then be most inefficient by introducing the principles of materialism into the very apostolate by which we are supposed to combat it. In spite of all our efforts to equip ourselves as well as we can for our apostolic work, we should always retain that aloofness and freedom of spirit that witnesses to higher values.

Especially in the present context of India we should be extremely careful in maintaining this true freedom from material things. The Indian mind has from time immemorial learned to appreciate renunciation from earthly things as the distinguishing mark of saintly men. Will the Indian of today recognize in us the evangelical pcverty and detachment that should lead him to a love of our guru, Christ? His search for our motivation will be all the more exacting as the great mass of citizens of the country are themselves still living in a relative state of poverty. Will he encounter in us the fatherly embrace of Christ, who became poor with the poor? The Indian seeker of truth may be distracted by the grand display of our material works of charity. Will he be able to see in and through our projects for more food better health and higher edu-

cation, the glowing interest in his spiritual good that should characterize all we do?

We should, by all means, learn to make use of all the material instruments which the secular world puts at our disposal. Yet the efficiency of our apostolate requires at the same time detachment of heart and genuine poverty of life. This is what Christ meant when He told us to 'sit down and calculate' like the man who wanted to build the tower or the king who was marching out to battle. If we do not renounce all we have, we cannot be His disciples. The tower we may plan to build through our own endeavours will be a failure because, after laying the foundation, we will not have resources to complete it. The battle we undertake with material weapons only will be doomed to fail, as our enemy in the world has more of those weapons. Our strength should lie in our detachment, our efficiency in being free from the very instruments we use.

Second norm: Charity should rule supreme.

In secular business it is efficiency that rules supreme. Once it has been established that a certain procedure is more profitable, business will decide to follow it, whatever the consequences. For it is money and material gain that determines its final success or failure. For other secular administrations it may be power or fame or some other goal that is desired. In some cases it is the welfare of human society or the good of a particular community that is aimed at. Almost of necessity efficiency has become the major rule, even if it is softened at times by humanitarian considerations.

In the apostolate efficiency may never acquire the same status. Charity should always enjoy the absolute priority in the motivations for our decisions. With charity we will allow certain illogicalities to enter into our decisions that would make the efficient business man shudder. Our Lord has an interesting parable that illustrates this very point (Mt. 20/1-16). After having related how various groups of workmen had been given employment in the same vineyard, some at nine o'clock in the morning, some at noon, some at three in the afternoon and some at five—just one hour before closing time!—Jesus says that the owner of the parable gave a full day's salary to all of them: just as much to the first group as to the late-comers. The complaint of those who had come first makes sense in the context of worldly business:

> "These man who were hired last, worked only for one hour, and you have put them on the same footing with us who have done the heavy work of the day and have stood the midday heat."

From the point of view of secular efficiency they were quite right. Any firm that attempted to run on such unequal terms of reward and salary would be in for endless trouble. But the owner of the vineyard refused to act on mere principles of efficiency: "My friend", he said, "I am doing you no injustice.

> Did you not agree with on a drachma a day ? Take what belongs to you and go. I wish to give the last man hired as much as I give you. Have I no right to do what I please with what is mine? Or do you begrudge my generosity?"

In other words: the owner wants to be generous, wants to be good and kind. This introduces another element into the situation with which secular efficiency cannot cope.

Christ's parable was spoken to explain to the Jews that God in His plan of salvation was not going to follow the narrow rules of human business. The Jews had been involved earlier through the Old Testament covenants. But in His generosity God would treat the late-comers, the non-Jews, with the same largesse which He had shown and was always willing to show to His chosen people. It is God's freely given charity that rules salvation and not calculable rules of business. The whole plan of the Incarnation was based on this. God did not give His Son because man could have demanded, or requested, or even imagined such a gift. He did it solely because "God loved the world so much" (Jn. 3/16).

Christ expects from us that our conduct should be ruled by the same spirit of uncalculating charity. Not only do we have to turn the other cheek, when struck on our right one. Not only do we have to pray for our enemies and do them good. No, we have deliberately to waive the rules of normal human efficiency in favour of supernatural charity. We have to yield in a court case even if the right is on our side: as when someone demands our tunic and we give him also our mantle. We have to suffer exploitation, as when foreign occupation troops make us carry burdens for one mile and we volunteer to carry them for two miles more. We have readily to undergo losses, by giving to people who ask for our help and by lending to those who want to borrow from us (Mt. 5/38-44). Again, it is not the particular ex-

amples that matter, but the new spirit that Christ wants to teach through them. In this new spirit everything is possible. We are no longer bound by the prospect of gains or losses. We are not restricted to give ourselves or our work on condition that it will be appreciated. We are not tied down to policies or procedures by the mere consideration of the external successes they will register.

It is clear that this will give a new dimension to our dealings with people, our appointment of personnel and the evaluation of our work. And let us not forget that it will enhance our *efficiency* to give it this dimension. The apostolate flourishes only through charity. In all the twenty centuries of her existence the Church has succeeded in recruiting, in age after age, millions of devoted persons who served Christ for the sake of charity alone. Take away the motivation of this charity from the Church today and the whole structure of her apostolate would collapse. At all costs, therefore, charity should be maintained as the supreme rule of action in our apostolic undertakings.

Third norm: Time spent in prayer is spent efficiently

Business has taught us the adage: Time is money. For the apostolate too time is of great importance. Opportunities that are given now may not come back tomorrow. Administering the sacraments, preaching Christ and sanctifying the world involve the element of time. Most pastors, religious and lay apostles will have experienced in their own lives how the lack of time has put severe restrictions on their apostolic efficiency. Many a dedicated follower of Christ knows what it means to be harassed from morning till night

with worries and anxieties that hardly leave time even for a short relaxation. Time-pressure may be so much upon us that we feel tempted to omit or shorten the periods devoted to prayer.

In this context it is good to remember that according to the norms of spiritual efficiency, time spent in prayer is time spent efficiently. Perhaps the most convincing argument to illustrate this truth is the example given by Our Lord Himself, in the daily practice of His apostolate. Right at the beginning of His ministry, in Capharnaum, we get a first glimpse of His devotion to prayer. Jesus had concluded a successful day of apostolate: He had preached in the synagogue, cured Simon's mother-in-law, instructed the first disciples and cured a large number of people who came to the house after the sun set that closed the sabbath. Presumably He must have talked with these persons till late that night. The Gospel tells us: "Early next morning, long before daylight, he got up and left the house and went off to a lonely spot, and prayed there" (Mk. 1/35). It is interesting to read the action of the disciples: "They sought Him out and found Him and said: 'Everyone is looking for You !" (Mk. 1/36). Obviously the disciples were surprised and their reaction may imply that they would have expected Jesus to give more time to the people. The whole story illustrates a frequent pattern in Jesus' apostolate: that He withdraws from the people to pray on His own.

There was the famous night "that He went up on the mountain to pray, and passed the whole night in prayer to God" (Lk. 6/12). It was the night that preceded the calling of the twelve disciples. There was the ecstasy on mount

Thabor, the vision of Moses and Elias with the voice from the clouds,—all of which took place "while Jesus was praying" (Lk. 8/29). There was the occasion when the disciples found Jesus praying in a certain place and they asked Him: "Lord teach, us to pray !" (Lk. 11/2). It was then that Jesus taught them the Our Father. There was the evening of the multiplication of loaves. Jesus had taught the multitudes all day. He had concluded His instruction with the miraculous meal and had dispersed the crowds, using His own persuasion and authority. Sending His disciples ahead in the boat, "He went up the hill by Himself to pray" (Mt. 14/23), and it was only towards the morning that He joined them again. Our Lord was a man of prayer and He made time to pray even in the midst of great apostolic activities. He spent much time in prayer: quite frequently the whole night!

As we know from the Our Father and from other traces of Our Lord's prayers left in the Gospel, His prayer was first and foremost a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. He spoke with His Father in a very intimate and personal way. He enjoyed the time He could be with His Father, the time during which He could give to His Father all the thoughts of praise, all the emotions of love that His human heart could give. His frequent admonitions about the need of insistent prayer, of continuous prayer, of trustful prayer, reflect the way in which He Himself must have put His apostolic anxieties before His Father. Christ's prayer was related to His apostolate, but He prayed first and foremost for the sake of prayer itself in the meaning of: 'giving glory to His Father'. We too should see the efficiency of our prayer in the same way: not merely in its function to

strengthen the apostolate, but rather as a first duty we have, as men and as Christians, to give glory to our Creator and Father.

Will it then be necessary for us to adduce more Gospel texts to stress the need of prayer? Should Christ's example not suffice to convince us of the need to set time apart for prayer at all costs, to 'spend the night in prayer' if need be, as He did? Or do we imagine ourselves to be more efficient than Christ, to have more apostolate engagements than He had? This principle can be hard for those deeply involved in apostolic work, but it should be said: Neglect of prayer will diminish the efficiency of the apostolate. For we may be worried about many things, but only one thing is essential (Lk. 10/42).

Fourth norm: Obedience weighs heavier than common sense

Another principle that we should never forget is the value of obedience, in spite of all the dictates of our common sense to the contrary. It may seem to us in certain situations that what we are told to do, goes against the line of action which we would have chosen ourselves. Our wish for efficiency may tempt us then to go our way and take the responsibility into our own hands. It is worthwhile considering whether this is really more efficient in the total context of the apostolate.

Christ entrusted the apostolate to the twelve and He gave them power and authority over the Church. This was a deliberate act on His part. He knew what he was doing when he said to all the Apostles: "Whatever you shall permit on earth, shall be permitted in heaven (i.e. before God).

Whatver you shall forbid on earth, shall be forbidden in heaven (i.e. before God)." (Mt. 18/18). The positive and negative way of putting this phrase serves to underline its exclusiveness. Christ gave, in some sense of the word, *all* authority and *exclusive* authority over His Church to the Pope and the bishops. The task of preaching, of sanctifying the world and of planting the Church devolves on every Christian, but it can never do so without relation to the task given to the hierarchy.

It has rightly been stressed in our days that the hierarchy cannot exercise this power in any way it likes. By very reason of the weight of their authority, Pope and bishops will be under a very serious responsibility to use their own power only in the service of the Church. It is the aspect of service, not that of authority, that should be foremost in their minds (Mt. 20/25-28). But it should be equally stressed that Christ expected real obedience to their pastors on the part of His followers. To His "Go and make disciples of all nations.....and teach them to observe all the commandments I have given you" (Mt. 28/19) there corresponds on the part of the new disciples real submission and obedience. Of course, bishops can make mistakes and their orders may go counter to our better knowledge. Even then, as long as we have not been commanded to sin, it is better to obey, even though we may be personally convinced that our obedience will make the apostolate suffer to some extent.

I have stressed the position of the hierarchy deliberately as it finds the most direct justification in the Gospel. But the principle of authority and obedience applies, of course in varying degrees, to all the spheres of the Church: the reli-

gious orders and congregations, the parish and the different types of institution. In some cases our voluntary promise of obedience to our superiors or the free act by which we joined an organization has created another claim to our obedience. It is impossible here, in the space of a few lines to tackle the problems involved in the day-to-day practice of obedience with any thoroughness. I shall state the argument for obedience simply from the point of view of spiritual efficiency. The question is then, supposing a conflict between the dictates of my own common sense and the precept of the superior, what is the more efficient way to act?

Fundamentally the whole question of Our Lord's express decision to entrust the apostolate to *a team*, to the *twelve* and so to their successors, should close the matter, Co-operation within the team is not possible without tensions of differences of opinion. But, as team dynamics show, the individual member does well to stick to the team, even though he may think he knows better in individual cases. For teamwork in the apostolate the superiors have the key position. Authority over the team has been entrusted to them. The final decision and responsibility of the work done by the team rests with them. Going against the express will of our superior means, consequently, a breaking down of the apostolate as 'team work'. If we deliberately carry on with our own initiatives, without the required sanction of the team leader and so of the team, we are in danger of finding ourselves in some type of apostolate of our own outside the stream of Christ's apostolate. This is why a refusal to obey in matters where obedience is due must be recognized as destructive of the apostolate itself, whatever immediate advantages may tempt us to do

so. This is the meaning of the adage: obedience weighs heavier than common sense. If you want to work with Christ, you will have to work in obedience to the superior He put over you.

A last thought that might be appropriate in the present-day climate of opinion: there is a growing desire in the Church that superiors should be more approachable, that they should consult the other members in the team, that they should be more sober in manifesting the external signs of their authority. There is a very good point in this and superiors are just as anxious as we are to live up to such promptings of the Spirit. But have we ever considered the other side of the picture? It will to a great extent depend on us whether our superiors can afford to adopt such new attitudes. They will be free to insist on the aspect of service only if we, those under authority, keep insisting on our obedience to them. They will happily renounce the external signs of pomp, if we show that our respect was not based on these external signs but on a true understanding of their relationship to Christ. The clamour for a 'break-through' in the vertical relationships within the Church will only be justified if the values of authority and obedience remain intact. Otherwise we may incur Christ's warning:

> "Anyone who is not with Me is against Me,
> and anyone who does not join Me in gathering, scatters"
> (Mt. 12/30).

And what could be more inefficient than acting "against Christ" or "scattering" what He has gathered ?

Fifth norm: One person is worth all the trouble

I do not know if the Apostles were ever tempted to consi-

der mankind as large masses, as we have learned to do. Surely, on their journeys through Asia Minor, Greece and Italy, they must have encountered to some extent the same problem: whether one should concentrate on the "multitudes" or on the "individual". Efficiency in the secular branches is more and more turning towards the multitudes. It is the taste of the majority that determines the content of the press, of radio, television and film. Production is geared to satisfy the cravings of the masses. Government attempts to enlist the support of the majority groups. Everywhere the new approach is made to the "mass", the "crowd", the "multitudes", and statistical figures record success or failure.

In the apostolate we cannot afford to forget our preaching to the multitudes, any more than this was forgotten by Christ or the Apostles. But there is another principle in the Gospel to counteract the excessive importance that might be attached to the collective approach: the principle that one person is worth all the trouble. Our Lord emphasizes this point in His special instructions to the Apostles. He said:

> "Anyone who welcomes one little child like this on My account, welcomes Me." (Mt. 18/5)

Christ speaks of a *"little child"*. He speak of *"one"* little child. Both elements have their value. The individual person, however, insignificant he may be from a worldly point of view, is rated very high in Christ's eyes. We are not allowed to overlook him. It would be quite wrong then to limit our apostolate to those whom we can reach through the channels of social communication (including

the Sunday Sermon) or to gauge our success by the number of people going to communion or receiving baptism. Neither are we permitted to give individual attention only to a chosen few, to the "upper ten" or to those in a position to help us. Every "little child", every simple Christian has a right to our attention and to our pastoral care.

In the same chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel Our Lord illustrates this pastoral duty with the parable of the lost sheep, (Mt. 18/10-14). Let us note how Christ stresses that the ninety-nine sheep are left behind, are wilfully neglected, while the pastor is searching for that hundredth sheep that was lost. The lesson ends with the principle:

> "So it is not the will of My Father in heaven that a single one of those little ones be lost."

Biblical research has established that in the early Church Our Lord's term "little ones" was understood as referring to the class of Christians that were living on the periphery of the Church. It was applied to those who were living in doubts, or in continuous temptations, or in a state of sin. They were the "little ones " of the Early Church and they are also the "little ones" of our own times. Christ's lesson then applies especially to them. Business can afford to neglect minorities and individuals. Not so Christ's apostles. However difficult this may be, however many demands there may be made on our time and energies, we may never succumb to the temptation of neglecting individual stray sheep that come our way. If need be, we have to leave our work for the ninety-nine and search for these individual souls. For it is not the will of the Father that a single one of them be lost. Gaining that last, hundredth, individual person is worth all the trouble we may have to take. A

dissipation of energies and a waste of personnel to secular efficiency:—Worth all the trouble for Christ.

Sixth norm: Through the folly of the cross failures become successes

The Pharisees laughed as they stood at the foot of Christ's cross. They jeered and joked and poked fun at Him. They felt triumphant and elated at the sight of Christ's utter failure. Christ's suffering and death was for them almost the theological proof that they had been right and He wrong. "If you are the Son of God, come down from the Cross !" It was the challenge that Christ should prove His claim in terms of success.

Success is the norm of secular efficiency. Procedures, meetings, organizations and enterprises prove their efficiency by producing results, by being successful. In a sense the same principle applies to the apostolate. For Christ and His Church it is also the ultimate success that counts: the success of the New Jerusalem in which all men will find their happiness in a sharing of all the good God is and all the good God gives. Our spiritual efficiency will also be measured by the yardstick of this ultimate success, whether it contributed to the bringing about of this heavenly Jerusalem or not. But there is one big difference in the case of spiritual efficiency: our yardstick, our norm, is not within our reach. We are not able to measure our success in terms of earthly realities, and the heavenly ones lies outside our ken. In other words: we cannot measure the success of our apostolic work, we cannot determine the exact degree of our spiritual efficiency.

What may look utter failure in the context of this world, may be a great success in God's eyes. As a matter of fact, in the plan of redemption God almost made it a principle that success can only come through apparent failure. Our Lord said to the disciples who were going to Emmaus: "Did not the Christ have to suffer thus before entering upon His glory?" (Lk. 24/26). St. Paul was thinking of this when reminding the Christians at Lystra and Iconium that we have to undergo many hardships if we want to enter the Kingdom of God (Acts 14/22). In his first letter to the Corinthians he calls it 'the folly of the cross": the apparent contradiction of eventual success through initial failure (1 Cor. 1/21-25).

This quality of being successful in spite of apparent failure is inherent to most of our apostolic works. We all know occasions when we have been granted the favour of seeing how our work has produced good results. We may have tasted the satisfaction of success in some of our undertakings. But usually the success of our work escapes our own estimation. To the outside observer our work may seem simply useless and fruitless. In terms of visible results it may not have much to show for itself. It is then that we have to believe in the spiritual efficiency of our apostolate, even if it cannot be seen. It is then that we have to remind ourselves of the folly of the cross, of the principle that through it our failures become successes.

The challenge thrown at Christ while He was hanging on the cross is still being thrown at us today. The world wants to know whether our claims are right and is demanding a proof in terms of success. This proof will be given

in the fulfilment of time. Meanwhile Christ has already proved successful in His own person by rising from the dead. But one day He will come victorious "on the clouds of heaven" (Mt. 26/64). That is the day when the wheat will be separated from the chaff, when the sheep will be divided from among the goats. It will be the final test of our efficiency when "fire will test the quality of everyone's work", Then it will be shown whether our apostolate was "gold or silver or precious stone.....or wood or hay or straw....." (1 Cor. 4/10-15). Then many of our apparent failures will be valued as glorious successes.

Seventh norm: Do not extinguish the Spirit

Five days before His death Our Lord was invited to a dinner given in His honour by Lazarus at Bethany. During the meal an incident took place. Mary, Lazarus' sister, took a jar of costly perfume and anointed Our Lord's feet with it. The smell of the perfume filled the whole house. Judas Iscariot, the man in charge of the purse, pointed out that this action had been a waste:

> "Why was this perfume not sold for sixty drachmas and the money given to the poor ?" (Jn. 12/5)

Judging by the rules of strict efficiency Judas was right. We know that other disciples agreed with him (Mt. 26/8-9). Strictly speaking, it would not have been necessary to pour out the whole jar over Our Lord's feet. Mary could have taken out just a handful and anointed His feet with it by way of a gesture. The rest of the perfume might have been sold and the money given to the poor.....

We will remember Our Lord's indignation at Judas'

remark. "Leave her in peace", He said. For in the apostolate we should give room to the Spirit who works through different persons in a variety of ways. It was psychologically impossible for Mary to embark on calculations in her gesture of love. She *had* to pour out the whole jar of perfume if she was to give adequate expression to her affection. Under the impulse of showing how she loved Him she could not have done otherwise. It was the Holy Spirit moving her to this great display of attachment to Christ. And Christ accepted her gesture in this way. He took it as a consolation for the death He was about to undergo. And He foretold that Mary's action would be praised in all places where the Gospel was to be preached. Her deed of love was a charismatic expression of total dedication, such as millions of people through the ages would love to have had the opportunity of giving. Cool business calculations prove totally ineffective and inadequate in this context.

It is good to remember this when dealing with people in the Apostolate. The Holy Spirit inspires charismatic qualities in many a person that would seem at first irrelevant or not in line with fixed policies. We can make grave errors of judgement if we overlook this fact. Absolute uniformity does no good even in secular fields of efficiency. It is destructive of the charismatic powers of the Church. The Holy Spirit cannot be put in a straight-jacket. He does not let Himself be forced to channel His enthusiasm through well-established institutions. We should be open to this, or we shall be in danger of obstructing Him.

There is no uniform pattern in the apostolate. Every one has his own gifts and talents. Everyone has to some

extent charismatic qualities that should be given scope for expression. And yet, it is the same Spirit that is working in all, and so it should not be difficult for us to cooperate. St. Paul's long essay on this point is worth meditating on (1 Cor. 12). It is interesting to note in the Gospel how people 'pointed out the difference between Christ's approach to the apostolate and that of John the Baptist. When dealing with this objection, Christ does not compare His way of doing things with that of John's as two distinct apostolates. Rather He stresses that both He and John were motivated by the same desire to bring people to conversion. The spirit urged John to do it in one way and Christ in another:

> "When John came, he neither ate nor drank, and people said, 'He has a demon.'
>
> Now that the Son of Man has come, he does eat and drink, and people say, 'Look at Him, a glutton and a drinker, the companion of tax-collectors and irreligious people' ". (Mt. 11/18-19).

Imagine the mistake we ourselves would make, if we thought that John was wrong because he had a different approach than Christ: Do we not very frequently pass judgement on workers in the apostolate, just as the Jews did, calling one "crazy" and others "gluttons or companions of sinners". The lesson is that the Holy Spirit makes use of different people in different ways, and we have to respect His charismatic leadership in this. Our search for true efficiency in the apostolate should never lose sight of this unpredictable and indispensable element of the charisms. We may never extinguish the Spirit !

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